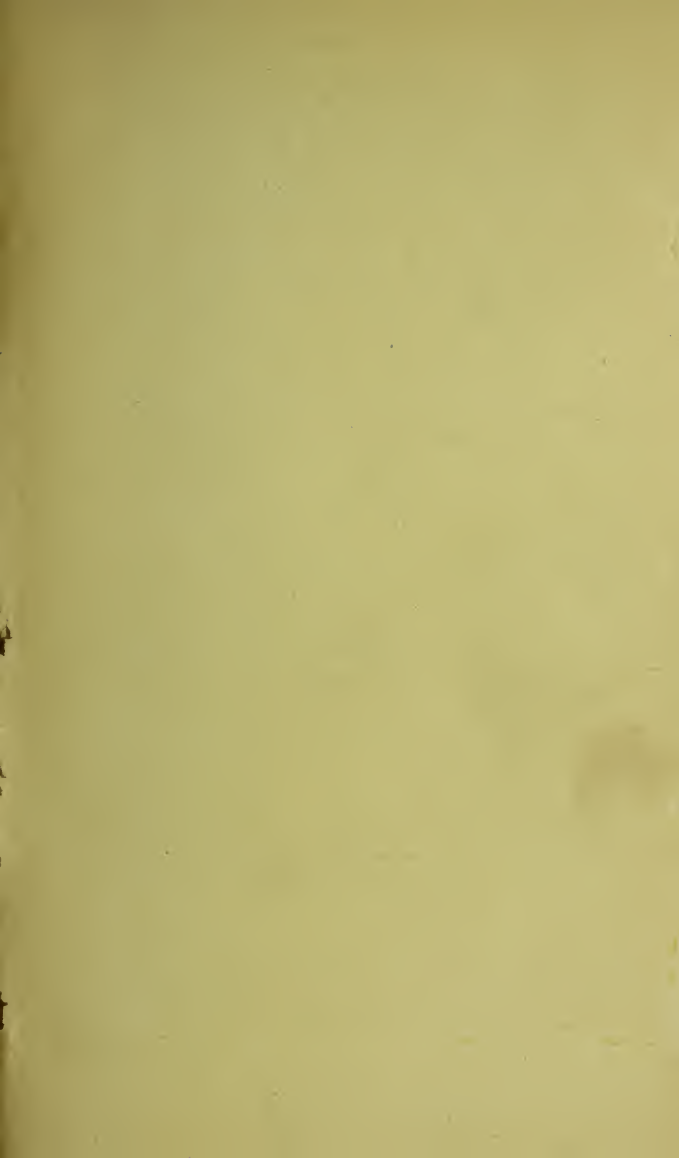


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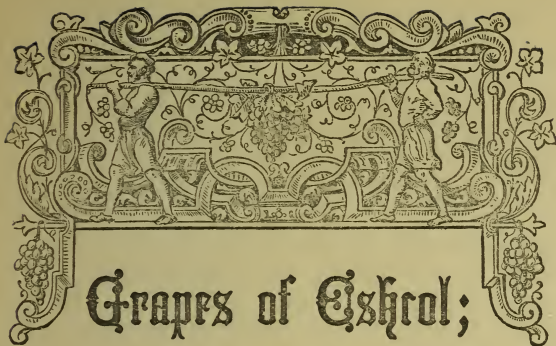
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1876.

"Thus take thy heart into the 'Land of Promise.' Shew it the pleasant hills and fruitful valleys: Shew it THE CLUSTERS OF GRAPES which thou hast gathered: to convince it that it is a Blessed Land, flowing with better than milk and honey."—RICHARD BAXTER, (1615.)

"The milk and the honey is beyond this wilderness. God be merciful to you; and grant that you be not slothful to go in to possess the land.

"They had the City itself in view: and they thought they heard all the bells therein to ring, to welcome them thereunto."—JOHN BUNYAN, (1628.)

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THIS LITTLE VOLUME
IS DEDICATED TO
ONE,
WHOSE CALM SUBMISSION
TO THE HAND OF GOD UNDER A LINGERING
SICKNESS, AND HER BRIGHT HOPE OF
"A BETTER COUNTRY,"
WHERE
"THE INHABITANT SHALL NO MORE SAY, I AM SICK,"
HAVE INSPIRED NOT A FEW OF ITS
THOUGHTS AND MUSINGS.

“ Wherefore, Beloved,
seeing that ye look for such things,
be diligent,
that ye may be found of Him in
peace,
without spot,
and
blameless.”

2 PETER III. 14.

PREFACE

SPECULATIVE discussion, attractive illustration, or the systematic treatment of a great theme, will not be found in these pages. They consist mainly of simple meditations on the glories of a Future World,—fragmentary thoughts and reflections, written with special reference to the chamber of sickness, the couch of suffering, and the home of bereavement.

Nothing surely can so cheer the fainting believer, bowed down with sin and sorrow, as the prospect of Heavenly bliss. It is the thought of the joy in the morning of immortality which dries earth's bitterest tears. The heart of the child leaps at the sight of his Father's house. The lights in the distant windows cannot fail to revive his spirit and quicken his footsteps.

The following are a few such distant rays

from "the Excellent Glory,"—a few GRAPES gathered by "Faith and Hope, the two spies from the true Canaan,"—a few Pisgah-glimpses of its Vineyards and Oliveyards. Glimpses, indeed, only they are,—at best fitful and transient ; for even the mount of faith is oftentimes wreathed with clouds and vapours, dimming to the brightest vision its views of the future. But shadowy and indistinct as at best they must be, they may help us the better to descend the Valley, complete our warfare, and, finally, with our pilgrim-staff, "to pass over this Jordan," (Gen. xxxii. 10.) By revealing a distant view of the crown, we may be enabled the more cheerfully to bear the cross. *"The very hope we have of it, works wonderful joy in the heart of a Christian. David did not live to see the glory of Solomon's temple, but he made provision for it, and cast the model of it, and he took much delight in the contemplation of what it would be. . . . Here are some sparks, some beginnings of the Glory of Heaven, and of that great joy which we shall have hereafter."**

The night-watch, with some whose eyes may

* Archbishop Usher, (1638.)

trace these pages, cannot now be long. Already the gray streaks of morning may be telling that they are "nearing sunrise." New strains of celestial music may be wafted from the half-opened portal—new voices from the spirit-land heard saying, "Come up hither." "Strangers and pilgrims" on the earth! let your citizenship be in Heaven. Let the rents and fissures which trial, in its varied forms, may have made in the walls of your frail earthly tabernacle, only serve to let the rays of the ineffable glory steal more brightly through. May these feeble foretastes quicken your longings for the full and gladfome fruition.

It will be seen that the Meditations have been numbered, so as to extend over a month, in case any should desire to use them as Daily Readings. There has been no attempt to link the chapters together by any train of consecutive thought. Each, purposely short, is independent of what precedes or follows. The reader may, moreover, find similar ideas or reflections more than once reappearing. But as the grand leading characteristics of Heavenly

happinefs revealed in Scripture, are comparatively few, such repetition (in the case of a devotional *series*) was, to a certain extent, unavoidable; and by those who read for profit, not for criticism, will be readily understood and forgiven.





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I.



“Chime on, ye bells ! again begin,
And ring the Sabbath morning in.
The labourer’s week-day work is done,
The rest begun
Which Christ has for His people won.”

“There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of
God.”—HEB. iv. 9.

HOW sweet the music of this first heavenly
chime floating across the waters of death
from the towers of the new Jerusalem !

Pilgrim, faint under thy long and arduous
pilgrimage, hear it ! It is REST. *Soldier*, carry-
ing still upon thee the blood and dust of battle,
hear it ! It is REST. *Voyager*, tossed on the
waves of sin and sorrow, driven hither and
thither on the world’s heaving ocean of vicis-
situde, hear it ! The haven is in sight ; the
very waves that are breaking on the shore

seem to murmur—" *So giveth He His beloved REST.*" It is the long-drawn sigh of existence at last answered. The toil and travail of earth's protracted week is at an end. The calm of its unbroken Sabbath is begun. Man, weary man, has found at last the long-sought-for *rest* in the bosom of his God !

This Heavenly Rest will be a rest from sin.

Sin is the great disturber of the moral universe. The world—the soul—was once like an *Æolian harp*; every passing zephyr woke it into melody. Now it is tuneless, unstrung; its notes dissonant and harsh. Not till the Sabbatic morning of heaven dawn, will the old harmonies be restored. Joyful anticipation! perfect and entire emancipation, not only from all temptation without, but from all bias to evil within. No latent principle of corruption—no depressing consciousness of inherent sin—no germinating seeds or roots that can develop themselves into fruit—no languid frames—no guilty fears and apprehensions—no sorrowful estrangements from that Love whose smile is heaven;—a rest from

Satan's deceitful wiles and insidious snares ;—these no longer felt or feared. What more can be needed? A rest *from sin*, and a rest *in God*. As the needle in the compass, after many tremulous vibrations, at last settles in steady repose in the direction of its pole, so the redeemed spirit—all its tremblings, and faintings, and fitful aberrations at an end—shall remain, with its refined energies, its ennobled powers, and purified aspirations undeviatingly fixed and centred on Jehovah Himself. Its eternal motto will be—“ *This is my rest for ever.*”

Heaven will be a Rest from all doubt and error.

Here, how much there is of darkness and uncertainty! The volume of the Divine ways is a mysterious volume. As the breath dims the window-pane in looking out on the fairest landscape, so the breath on the windows of sense and sight often obscures the glory of the moral landscape, causing us to exclaim—“ *Now we see through a glass darkly!*” The material world around us, and the spiritual world within us, are full of enigmas which we cannot solve; much

more may we expect marvels and mysteries in the ways and dealings of God—"deep," *great deep* "judgments!"

But *then* all will be cleared. "*In Thy light shall we see light.*" The day will then break, and the looming murky shadows shall for ever flee away. Doctrinal difficulties will be explained, apparent inconsistencies removed, withering doubts for ever silenced. No more impeachments of the Divine veracity, or questionings of the Divine procedure. Looking down from the summit of the everlasting hills on the mazy windings of the earthly pilgrimage, every ransomed tongue will have the one confession—"He hath done all things well."

The Rest of Heaven will be a rest from sorrow and suffering.

This is a weeping world. Deny it who may; it has its smiles, but it has as often its tears.

Ye who have the cup of its joys fullest, be thankful while it is yours; but carry it with trembling. The head that is now planning its golden projects may to-morrow be laid on the

pillow of sickness, with the dim night-lamp for weary months its companion. The joyous circle, now uninvaded by the King of Terrors, may to-morrow be speaking of their "loved and lost." The towering fabric of human happiness, which is now rapidly uprearing, may, in the twinkling of an eye, become a mass of ruins.

But if "weeping endure for the night," "joy cometh in the morning." Yet a little while, mourning believer! and you will shed your last tear, heave your last pang. Once enter that peaceful haven, and not one wave of trouble shall ever afterwards roll. The very fountain of your tears will be dried. Your remembrance of all the tribulations of the nether world will be like the visions of some unquiet dream of an earthly night, which the gladfome sunshine of morning has dispelled, the confused memories of which are all that remain. "*And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away,*" (Rev. xxi. 4.)

Here our trials are *needed*. The angel has to come down "to trouble the waters," in order to

make us sensible of his presence. It is when the pool is *disturbed* we see most of our God. But in heaven, though the Great Angel will be *ever* present, there will be no more waters to trouble. It is "*a sea of glass.*" The last ripple of the last murmuring billow will break upon the shores of Jordan, and "*immediately*" there will be "*a great calm.*"

The Rest of Heaven is a rest which "remaineth."

Nothing is permanent here. The best of earthly joys are evanescent;—like the bubble rising to the surface of the stream, which glitters for a moment in the sunshine in its rainbow-hues, and then is *gone*, the place that knew it knowing it no more! But the rest above is *eternal*;—no foe can invade it, no storms can disturb it. It is the rest of a final *home*, over the portals of which is written, "*Ye shall go no more out.*"

Reader, pitch not your tabernacle here! Yours now is, or ought to be, a tent or *nomad* life. The Christian is an *Arab* in the present probation state. He has no fixed abode. His dwelling is constructed not of stones or enduring material.

The rope, and the canvas, and the wooden pins, all indicate "the pilgrim and stranger on the earth." It is a wilderness rest. He must be content with wilderness provision. If you have many sources of earthly happiness, sit loosely to them. Let these rills only draw you nearer the Fountain-head;—let these gifts only unite you closer to the Giver. "He gave them," says Richard Baxter, "to be refreshments in thy journey; and wouldst thou dwell in thy inn, and go no further?" Soon He Himself—your "exceeding joy"—will supersede them. The rill will be no longer needed when you have the Great Source; the starlight when you have Sunlight; creature-comforts when you have the Infinite Presence. "*There remaineth a rest!*" Listen to this, child of suffering and sorrow! Thou who art beaten about now with "a great fight of afflictions," thou wilt soon be *at home*;—soon *with God*;—and nothing then, evermore, to break the trance of thy bliss! Every time the sounding line is let down, the response is, "*Nearer shore!*" Sainted ones in that spirit-world, like the birds which greet the earthly voyager as he approaches

land, are hovering around thee, telling that thy Home is at hand—that soon thou shalt furl thy sails, and reach the desired haven. “My little bark,” says one who has now realised her glowing anticipations, “is riding serenely through the storm, and soon I shall drop my anchor in the still waters of eternal rest and glory.”*

The joys of the Heavenly Rest will be enhanced by contrast.

This is one beautiful element in the contemplation of future bliss, which angels know nothing of—the *joy of contrast*. These Blessed Beings never knew what it was to sin or to suffer. These glorious Vessels, launched on the “summer seas of eternity,” never knew what it was to wrestle with the tempest, or, like the shipwrecked apostle, to be “nights and days in the deep” of trial.

The blind man exults in the boon of restored sight, in a way which others who have never known its loss cannot experience. The sick man appreciates the return of vigorous health, in a

* Mrs Winflow's Life.

way which others can know nothing of who have never felt its privation. The labourer enjoys his nightly repose all the more by contrast with the hours of toil which preceded it. The soldier, after years of suffering and privation, appreciates the music of that word "*home*," as he never could have done unless he had undergone the terrible discipline of trench, and night-watch, and battle-field.

Will it not be the same with the believer in entering on his Rest? Will not his former experience of suffering, and sin, and sorrow, enhance all his new-born joys? It is said of saints, that they will be "*equal to the angels*." In this respect they will be *superior*! The angel never knew what it was to have an eye dimmed with tears, or to be covered with the soil of conflict. *He* never can know the exquisite beauty of that Bible picture (none but the weeping pilgrim of earth can understand or experience it) where, as the climax of heavenly bliss, God is represented as "wiping away all tears from their eyes!" Beautiful thought! The weary ones from the pilgrim-valley seated by the calm river of life,

bathing their temples—laving their wounds—ungirding their armour;—the dust of battle for ever washed away;—and listening to the proclamation from the inner sanctuary—the soft strain stealing down from the Sabbath-bells of glory—“*The days of your mourning are ended!*” (Isa. lx. 20.)

Christian, has this glorious rest the place in your thoughts it ought to occupy? Are you delighting to have frequent Pisgah-glimpses of this Land of Promise? Are you living as the inheritor and heir of such a blessed immortality, “declaring plainly” that you “seek a better country?”

How sad, how strange, that the eye of faith should be dimmed to these glorious realities by the fugitive and passing things of sense. Grovellers that we are! with all this wealth of glory within reach—with these deathless spirits claiming to outlive all time—that we should suffer the seen and the temporal to eclipse the splendours of eternal day! “Reader, look to thyself, and resolve the question; ask conscience, and suffer it to tell thee truly that thou put thine eternal

rest before thine eyes as the great business thou hast to do in this world. Hast thou watched and laboured with all thy might that no man take thy crown?"*

Sit no longer cowering in darkness when light is streaming from your Father's windows and inviting you upwards. A few more rolling suns—a few more swings of Time's pendulum—and the world's curfew-bell will toll, announcing the Sabbath of eternity has come. Seek rest in Christ now. Flee to the crevices of the Rock of Ages now, if you would nestle for ever in the golden eaves of the eternal Temple. Be ever sitting on the edge of your nest, pluming yourself for flight;—so that when death comes, "with wings like a dove"—the celestial plumage of faith, and hope, and love—you may soar upwards to the Sabbath of your God, and be *at rest* FOR EVER!

* Baxter.



II.



"A little while the fetters hold no more,
The spirit long-enthral'd is free to soar,
And takes its joyful flight,
On radiant wings of light,
Up to the throne, to labour or adore!"

"They rest not day and night."—REV. iv. 8.



HAT a seeming paradox is this! We last contemplated Heaven under the beautiful and significant figure of a state of *rest*;—here it is spoken of as a state of *unrest*! "They rest"—"They rest not." It is what the old writers quaintly designate, "*The rest without a rest.*" The combination of these two similitudes involves no inconsistency; they bring together two different but not antagonistic elements of *earthly* happiness, which will have their highest exemplification in the bliss of a perfect world.

The emblem suggests two views of a future Heaven—

First, It is a state of ceaseless activity in the service of God.

Constituted as we now are, a condition of listlessness and inactivity is most inimical to true happiness. Indeed, if we can judge from the references in Scripture to the constitution of higher and nobler natures, we are led to infer that *activity* is a great normal law among the loftiest orders of intelligent being. Angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, the “burning ones and the shining ones,” are “*ministering spirits*,” engaged in untiring errands of love to redeemed man, and probably also to other provinces in God’s vast empire ; nay, with reverence be it said, the Great God Himself is ever putting forth the unceasing *activities* of His omnipotence. “*He that keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps.*” “*My Father,*” said Christ, “*worketh hitherto, and I work.*” It is sublimely said of Him, “*He fainteth not, neither is weary,*” (Ps. cxxi. 4; John v. 17; Isa. xl. 28.)

The human spirit has the same lofty heritage

Activity is linked with pure and unfullied enjoyment. The very curse of labour and the sweat of the brow—the birthright of toil—is the birthright of mercy. A philosopher of ancient times said, if he had truth in his grasp, he would open his hand and let it fly away that he might enjoy the pursuit of it. Transfer this to heaven. *There* the law and love of activity will still be a governing principle among the spirits of the glorified; and in this we shall be assimilated to the “*living ones*,” whose very name indicates the ardour of their holy being. “*They rest not!*” There will be no more of the lassitude and languor of earth. *Here* our bodies are clogs and hindrances to mental activity. *There* the glorified frame will be a help and auxiliary to the ecstatic soul. *Here* the remains of indwelling corruption is like the chained corpse which criminals of old were compelled to drag behind them. It elicits the mournful cry, “*O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?*” (Rom. vii. 24.) That soliloquy will be heard no more in the “better country.” There, every chain will be unloosed, and the un-

caged spirit soar upwards unhampered by the impediments of its earthly coil.

Glorious description! "They serve Him *day and night*," (Rev. vii. 15.) No more pauses from weariness or faintness; no more fitful frames and feelings. It has been said of God's people in the present world, "Though they do not weary *of* their Master's work, they often weary *in* the work." Their experience is impressively given in the Song of Solomon, when the Church, or believer in his earthly state, is represented as saying, "*I sleep, but my heart waketh*" (Cant. v. 2) —worldly cares and business and engrossments chaining down the soul, and inducing a state of drowsy insensibility. But *there*, they shall not require to "*lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees*," (Heb. xii. 12;) no more waking up refreshed from the repose of exhausted nature —no more complaining that "*the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak*," (Matt. xxvi. 41.) If any of us have felt the pleasurable-ness of doing good, even in a present imperfect, chequered world, what will—what *must* this feeling be, in a state of holy activity, with no sin or

weakness to repress our ardour or damp our energies?

And let us note the chief ingredient, the grand element, in this state of ceaseless employment. It will be *the service of God*. "*They rest not day nor night*," uttering the threefold ascription to a Triune-Jehovah—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—"Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of hosts," (Isa. vi. 3.) If activity be an essential element in true happiness, surely *that* happiness will be enhanced by the attractiveness of the service in which it is our privilege to be engaged. An earthly servant, possessed of an honourable nature, would feel himself obligated to perform work faithfully and conscientiously even to a *bad* master; but how would his joy in the performance of his duty be increased by the consciousness that he was serving some lofty and beneficent spirit who was an ornament to his station and revered by all? If we carry this law to the pinnacle of all greatness and moral excellence, surely here will be the crown and consummation of creature-happiness—cheerful duty in the service of Him whose favour is life!

What is the truest source of joy to an earthly child? Is it not by active duty, as well as by passive obedience, fulfilling his parent's wishes? Will he not even *suffer* much for the parent he loves? The *earthly* relationship is in this, as in many other respects, a beautiful type of the *heavenly*. What pure and unfulfilled delight will it afford the sainted spirit to be engaged constantly in doing the will of Him who is better and kinder than the best of earthly parents! Look at Him who, being "very man" as well as "very God," understood all the tenderest sensibilities of the human heart! What was the *great* (shall we say, the *only*) joy which brightened the pilgrimage of the Man of Sorrows? What was the one source of purest, ineffable delight to *Him*, as he toiled on His blood-stained path? Was it not the elevating consciousness of doing His heavenly Father's will?—" *My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work!*" (John iv. 34.) We are always most willing to serve those we love most. With what bounding joy, then, shall we embark in heaven on errands of active service, when we shall there

have unfolded to us (what we here know so little of) the unspeakable love of Him who for us spared not His own, His only Son! Oh, what a motive will there be *here* for all the energies of the glorified body, and all the faculties of the glorified spirit;—to love, and serve, and honour, and adore *Him*, around whom our deepest affections are centred, and our heart of hearts entwined;—getting ever *nearer* Him and *liker* Him,—gazing more intently on His matchless perfections—diving more into the ocean-depths and mysteries of His love, and becoming the channels of conveyance of that love to others! Then, indeed, will duty be turned into enjoyment, and supreme and unswerving devotedness to His service be its own best reward.

It will be a consecration, too, not only of unfettered, unclogged, unwearied powers; there will be the still further element of a pure and single-eyed devotedness, which earth never knew. Here, alas! in the holiest activities of the present state of being, there are ever, even when we ourselves may be insensible to them, the existence of mingled motives. Wretched self, in its thou-

sand insidious forms, so imperceptibly creeps in, marring and mutilating our best endeavours to please God. Our best offerings are full of blemishes—our best thoughts are polluted with low, grovelling cares. But *there*, self will for ever be dethroned. This usurping Dagon will then be broken for ever in pieces before the presence of the true Ark, in that temple wherein “there is nothing that defileth.” God’s glory will then be the one grand, absorbing, and terminating object of all desires and all aspirations;—then, for the first time in reality, shall we come to real life and exemplify that great truth, which many from their infancy have had on their lips—“Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever.”

Thus will active and ceaseless occupation in the service of God form one of the sweetest employments and sources of happiness in the upper sanctuary. “They rest,” in a blessed absence from all sin, all suffering, all trial. “They rest *not*,” in the lofty behests and engagements of holiness. Believers are called in this world by the name of “*servants*,” “workmen,” “husband-

men." They will still retain these same designations of active duty. "*His servants*," we read, "*shall serve Him*," (Rev. xxii. 3.) God, in every portion of His wide universe, seems to work by creature agency. He does not require to do so. A simple volition of His sovereign will would suffice to fulfil His counsels as effectually as if never an angel sped on his embassy of love! But as on earth He accomplishes His purposes in His Church by *human* agency, and as in Heaven He employs *angelic* agency,—those who "excel in strength" "*doing His commandments*, hearkening unto the voice of His word,"—so it would seem, as if in merciful consideration for the happiness of His glorified saints, He is to make this a permanent law through eternity; so that Heaven will be only a development of the present condition of Grace—with this single, but important difference, that there will be no sin.

Indeed, it is this very idea of Heaven as a state of *action*, that brings out the beauty of the former representation as a state of *rest*. *Rest*, to be enjoyed, supposes previous activity or labour; and although it can have no such relation in a

place where weariness and fatigue are unknown, we can readily carry out the beautiful idea of Pollok, in his "Course of Time," of the ransomed spirit retiring from the loud hallelujahs around the throne, to hold its silent meditations apart by "the living fountains of waters:"—this, however, only *for a time*;—once more to return with unflagging and unabated energy to resume the song, and speed on new errands of love.

Reader, is this your anticipation of Heaven?—Heaven, not as it is pictured in the dreams of the sentimental or contemplative Christian;—not a drowsy Mohammedan paradise—a state of torpor and inaction; but as it is known to angels, who are now, though unseen to us, travelling down to our world in ceaseless agencies of love and comfort? Do we realise this, and in realising the grand truth, are we training for these lofty duties?—ready to take the angels' place, or to join the angels' company, on similar ministries to some other distant provinces of creation? What the poet has said of the present life is as true of its glorious counterpart hereafter—

"Life is real, life is earnest."

Rest not until you have attained a well-grounded assurance that this future state of active blessedness is to be yours ;—that you are looking for it, preparing for it, ready for it. Test your meetness for the Heaven that is before you by the question, Do I delight *now* in energetic employment in the service of my God? Is prayer a season of refreshing? Does praise call into willing and gladfome exercise all the renewed affections of a heaven-born nature? Is the Sabbath a joyful pausing-place in life's chequered journey ;—not a mere interlude of repose for the tired and jaded body after the incessant toils and cares of the week, but the day which summons into exercise the loftier activities of my nobler being? Do I spend it under the feeling of Eternity being an *everlasting Sabbath*, and that everlasting Sabbath occupied in some personal ministry of holiness and love? In this life there should, at least, be assimilations to the life hereafter. Though not in *degree*, it should be the same in *kind*. If activity in a little child gives indication of the energy and resolution of the *man*, so activity in the service of God, in a

state of grace, will be the pledge and earnest of nobler activities in a state of glory.

“O blessed rest! when we ‘rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!’—when we shall rest from sin, but not from worship—from suffering and sorrow, but not from joy! O blessed day! when I shall rest with God—when I shall rest in knowing, loving, rejoicing, and praising!—when my perfect soul and body shall together perfectly enjoy the most perfect God—when God, who is love itself, shall perfectly love me, and rest in His love to me, and I shall rest in my love to Him—when He shall rejoice over *me* with joy, and joy over me with singing, and I shall rejoice in Him.” *

* Baxter.



III.



“Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way;
But to act that each to-morrow
Finds us further than to-day.”

“They rest not day and night.”—REV. iv. 8.

WE have already regarded this description of the Redeemed in heaven—“They rest not”—as denoting a condition of *ceaseless employment* in the service of God.

We may consider it now as suggesting a state of *continual progress*.

If we have found activity to be a law of our nature, we may assert the same, with equal truth, with reference to *progress*. The mind is ever aspiring after advancement. “*Not as though I had already attained,*” is the utterance not merely of the renewed spiritual nature ;—it is the voice

of man's restless spirit in all the varied phases and conditions of humanity. It is exemplified in every-day life. Without the consciousness of advancement we have not a perfect idea of happiness.

Who does not feel, for example, a ceaseless and ever-increasing aspiration after more knowledge? This is all the more remarkable, too, in the case of those who have made the largest acquisitions in human learning.* The range of their acquirements, instead of satisfying, seems rather to whet their appetite for more; so that the noblest and most gifted of the human species,—our Lockes, and Bacons, and Newtons,—are those who are alike most conscious of the limited range of *present* knowledge, and most ardently desirous of adding to their intellectual wealth.

Transfer this to Heaven. *There*, there will be a constant aspiration after increased knowledge, holiness, love, and resemblance to God. All our present mental capacities will doubtless be indefinitely expanded on our entrance into

* See Whately's "Revelations on a Future State."

blifs ; but this will be only a fresh starting-point for loftier acquisitions. The soul and its glorified aspirations will be like the sun "coming forth from his chamber, and rejoicing like a strong man to run his race ;" ever climbing the firmament, yet never reaching the meridian ; coming nearer and nearer "the excellent glory," and yet still speaking of it as "light inaccessible !"

We have some pledge or foretaste given us of this advancement, even in our present *spiritual* state. The renewed man goes "from strength to strength ;" he *advances* in the divine life ; he becomes more and more "meet," by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, for the heavenly inheritance. May we not warrantably infer from analogy, that this advancement will not be arrested, but rather increased and carried on in a mightier ratio ? "If grace," says the author of the "Saint's Rest," "makes a Christian differ so much from what he *was*, as to say, 'I am not the man I was ;' how much more will glory make us differ ! Doubtless as God *advanceth* our senses and enlargeth our capacity

so will He advance the happiness of those senses, and fill up with Himself all that capacity."

Add to all this—this element of progression will be in *one direction*. Not as on earth, where there was also a law of perpetual progress, but it was often a *downward* progress,—where the aphorism, "Knowledge is power," had, alas! too often the fatal interpretation attached to it of a power for evil; not bringing the heart nearer God, but assimilating it more with the fiend, enlarging the intellect only for its degradation. But the advancement of the soul, in all the future phases of its moral and spiritual being, will be entirely *God-wards*.—It will be the eagle's flight, soaring ever upward, nearer the sun, till lost in the blaze of "the excellent glory."

God is alone of all beings *unchangeable*. He is as incapable of any addition to His essential glory and happiness, as these are incapable of detraction.—"He is *without variableness or the least shadow of turning*," (James i. 17.) The devils in a lost state are subject to a continual and progressive *change*, but *it* is a downward and progressive *deterioration*; with the sainted spirit

it will be entirely *amelioration*. While the others are sinking deeper and deeper in the abyfs of woe, or retreating into wider and more eccentric orbits from the great central Sun of all light and happinefs, the redeemed will ever be narrowing their orbits, coming nearer and nearer the great central throne.

Reader, you are lifping here only the *alphabet* of knowledge ; you know nothing as you are yet to know. Heaven will be, in a nobler fenfe than ever was realifed on earth, a *student* life. The angels, we read, “defire to look into” the myfteries of falvation. They “stoop over” (as the word literally means) this vaft volume in the archives of eternity. *You* will then unite with thefe principalities and powers in talking your immortal intellect with frefh discoveries of “the manifold wifdom of God.” We know that thofe faints on earth who have attained moft knowledge of God, are thofe who have longed with greateft ardour to know more of Him. Though *Mofes* had feen more of His glory than others, his prayer is, “*I befeech thee, fhew me thy glory,*” (Exodus xxxiii. 18.) *David*, whose thirft had

been quenched more than most at the Fountain of infinite love and excellence, is heard exclaiming, "*My soul thirsteth for God*," (Psalm xlii. 2.) *Paul*, who had soared to the third heaven, and who "*counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ*," (Phil. iii. 8,) still prays, like a lisping learner, "that I *may* know *Him*," (Phil. iii. 10.)

Nor will it be one theme only that will engross and engage the saints' glorified powers and activities. We must not think of Heaven as some startling and violent revolution of present tastes, and studies, and occupations; as if we shall then be no longer the beings we once were, and be able to find no traces of personal identity. Our feelings, our tastes, our studies, *may* possibly and *will* possibly continue the same as they were, only glorified, sanctified, and purified from the dross of sin! May we not there possibly delight still to unravel the mysteries of science, the laws which govern a renovated creation; or to ponder the story of Providence past;—this, too, not confined to one atom-world, but as unfolded in God's works and ways in other provinces of His empire? The very feelings and

affections, also, of our present nature (the best, at least, and noblest of then,) will not be quenched or annihilated; they will, on the contrary, have vaster objects and loftier spheres for their exercise. Take, for example, apparently the most airy and visionary of all our present emotions, HOPE. *Hope* will not perish with the present preliminary state. Poetry, under a beautiful impersonation, has truthfully represented her as relighting her torch "at nature's funeral pile." It is, in one sense indeed, true, that Hope will then be changed into fruition; all distracting fears and misgivings will cease. The *hope* of eternal life, the *hope* full of immortality, the *hope* of being with God and His Christ, which in our moments of depression and faithlessness was clouded here, that hope will be "swallowed up" in complete fulfilment. But many of the *present* joyous elements of *hope* will still remain;—the hope of reaching higher degrees of perfection, the hope of acquiring deeper and yet deeper views of the character and glory of Him who is past finding out; the hope of becoming more and more assimilated to His holy image, climbing higher and higher the altitudes of bliss, and

obtaining a wider and still wider sweep of the moral landscape that grows upon our view with the widening horizon.

I love that beautiful description of Heaven, as the "*rest*" of God's people ; when the clarion of battle is hushed,—every storm-cloud past,—every weary night-watch at an end,—the spirit cradled in perfect peace,—the Sabbath of eternity ! But more elevating and glorious still seems the description of Heaven as a place of endless and ceaseless *progression* ; the spirit making giant advances in all that is pure, and lovely, and godlike ; ever adding to the domain of knowledge ; having new and more wondrous revelations of the Divine character and attributes ;—comprehending more and more the mysteries and secrets of Redeeming love, and yet these mysteries growing with every fresh discovery ; still speaking of its " heights and depths," its " lengths and breadths," and these as " passing understanding !"



IV.



Many Mansions.

“All our earthly journey past,
Every tear and pain gone by,
Here together met at last,
In the mansions of the sky,
Each the welcome ‘*Come*’ awaits,
Conqueror over death and sin ;
Lift your heads, ye golden gates,
Let the ransom’d travellers in !”

“In my Father’s house there are many mansions.”—
JOHN xiv. 2.

“**M**ANSIONS”—“many mansions”—“a house”—“my Father’s house.” How many reflections are crowded into this one brief utterance of our gracious Redeemer ! With what a homelike aspect do they invest our every thought of Heaven ! They were among His last words ; He Himself was on His way to that peaceful “homestead” of which He speaks.

Let us gather around Him, with the house of His Father in sight, and taste this Eshcol grape which He himself plucks from the borders of the Heavenly Canaan.

The verse speaks of MULTIPLICITY—"many mansions."

Had He been addressing His own disciples alone, the assurance would have been sufficient, "There will be a home for each of *you*." But He is discoursing for all time. His omniscient eye discerned at that moment the unborn myriads whom this chapter and this verse were to console and cheer. He would, therefore, certify that there is abundant provision made for all—patriarchs, prophets, saints, martyrs ;—from the time that righteous Abel bent alone, a righteous, redeemed saint, before the throne—the first sheaf of a mighty harvest—until the garner be filled, and the song of the ransomed become "as the voice of much people, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings," (Rev. xix. 6.) He is to bring "many sons unto glory." There is grace for all—crowns for all—mansions for all! Heaven has been filling for

six thousand years, and still there is room. How different its "recompense of reward" from worldly crowns and worldly honours! In the *earthly* race "*many* run, but *one* (only) receiveth the prize," (1 Cor. ix. 24.) In the heavenly the competition is open to "whosoever will." There is no jarring of interests in this loftier *arena*. The glorification of one is not attained there **at** the expense of another's downfall or exclusion. The mansions are many. The candidates are a mighty multitude which no man can number. Believer! "so run that you may obtain!"

The verse speaks of PERMANENCY—they are "*mansions*."

The word in the original (*μνοαὶ*) is not a tent or temporary tabernacle, but a *durable* residence, never to be altered or demolished. The most graphic of Eastern travellers thus gives a description of tent-life, which, by contrast, affords the best illustration of the mansion-life of heaven: "When the cold, sullen morning dawned, and my people began to load the camels, I always felt loth to give back to the waste this little spot of ground, that had glowed for a while

with the cheerfulness of a human dwelling. My tent was spared to the last, but when all else was ready for the start, then came its fall. The pegs were drawn, the canvas shivered, and in less than a minute there was nothing that remained of my genial home, but only a pole and a bundle." *

"The tents of the East," says another,† "seldom remain long in the same place. The traveller erects his temporary abode for the night, takes it down in the morning, and journeys onward. The shepherds of the country are also always moving from one place to another. The brook fails on which they relied for water, or the grafs required for the support of their flocks is consumed, and they wander on to a new station."

How strikingly illustrative is this of the Bible figure, "the house of our earthly tabernacle" being "dissolved" (or taken down), (2 Cor. v. 1.) The framework of mortality, like the Arab tent, is upreared for a time, but, after subserving its temporary purpose, it is, pin by pin, demolished, and the place that once knew it knows it no more.

* "Eöthen."

† Professor Hackett.

Not so the ever-during mansions of our Father's house. They are "incorruptible" and "eternal in the heavens." No failing of brooks there! No joys withered and smitten there, like the grass of the wilderness. "The Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them to living fountains of waters," (Rev. vii. 17.) Ah! it is the saddest, the most humiliating feature of the joys of earth, that, however pure, noble, elevating they may be at the moment, there is no calculating on their permanency. The mind will, in spite of itself, be haunted with the dark *possibility* of the ruthless invader of all happiness coming and dashing the full cup in a thousand fragments on the ground. In *Heaven* no shadow of vicissitude or change can ever enter to dim an ever-brightening future. Once within that heavenly fold, we are in the fold for ever. On the lintels of the eternal mansion are inscribed the words, "Ye shall go no more out." Our happiness and joy will be as immutable and stable as everlasting love and power and faithfulness can make them.

The verse speaks of DIVERSITY—there **are**

"many mansions;"—not only many in number, but manifold in their degrees of glory.

All will be happy. A halo of unutterable bliss and glory will encircle each separate dwelling, beyond what eye hath seen, or ear heard, or heart conceived. But as "one star differeth from another star in glory," so, also, we have reason to believe, there will be gradations in the scale of future blessedness.

The allusion here is evidently to the different courts of the Jewish temple. These were diverse in name and character. The outer and inner courts, the court of the Gentiles, the courts of the priests, the Holy of Holies. All these were consecrated as portions of the same "House of the Lord." The lowliest Israelite was within sight of the altar, and within hearing of the High Priest's benediction. But there were some courts more hallowed and glorious than others,—their sacredness increasing the nearer the worshipper approached the place where dwelt the mystic Shekinah. It will be the same with the "many mansions" of the Heavenly Temple. All the vast multitude in the new Jerusalem will be

within range of the benediction of the Great High Priest, and as such they must be *blest*. But there will be "inner courts" and enclosures of greater honour and glory. The more intense and exalted his love and devotedness on earth, the nearer will the believer be permitted to approach the Holiest of all,—the nearer admission will he have to the Father's presence, and receive the more distinguishing badges of the Father's love. There will be one mansion for him whose pound hath "gained five pounds," and another mansion for him whose pound hath "gained ten pounds." Each, too, will be apportioned according to some earthly antecedents. There will be the special mansion of the *martyr*, who was borne from his earthly tent in the chariot of fire. There will be the special mansion of the *missionary*, who surrendered home, ease, worldly honour, in his noble embassy, and stood alone and unfriended on Pagan shores, witnessing for a despised Saviour. There will be the mansion for the minister of Christ, who boldly proclaimed the message of life and death. There will be the mansion for the Sabbath-school teacher, **who**

toiled to bring youthful trophies to the foot of the cross. There will be the mansion for the pining sufferer, who glorified God by patience and un murmuring resignation ;—for the child, that fell on earth a withered blossom, whose tent was taken down “while it was yet day,” but reconstructed into a building of God eternal in the heavens. There will be a mansion for the old veteran of the cross, the champion in a hundred battles of the faith ; and for the youthful soldier, who was only buckling on his armour when summoned from the earthly struggle.

The least in the kingdom, I repeat, will have blessedness to the full—a glory and a joy which leaves no void or *vacuum*. As in the terrestrial, so in the celestial firmament. Though every planet circling round the Sun of Deity will shine with a borrowed splendour, yet the larger the planet, and the nearer its orbit is to its grand centre, the greater will be its radiance and glory. Though every flower will in itself be perfect, reflecting the lovely hues and tints of heaven, yet they will be of diverse form and colour. Some will diffuse a sweeter fragrance, or cluster in larger and richer groups than others. But all,

large and small, the saint a hundred years old and the child translated in infancy, will (notwithstanding this diversity) have the same *quality* of blifs. The planet at the outskirts of the heavenly sphere and that nearest the centre will be bathed in one and the same rays of ineffable glory.

But while the verse speaks of *Diversity*, it speaks also of UNITY.

There will be diversity in unity, and unity in diversity. The Church triumphant is *one* house. The Church on earth, alas! is a house divided against itself—church divided against church—Christian against Christian. Nominally the children of one Father, but dwelling in separate tabernacles. One saying, “I am of Paul,” and another, “I of Apollos.” Nominally pilgrims on one road, traversing the same wilderness, but each keeping his own peculiar and separate pathway, journeying on often with no look of kindly recognition exchanged, as if they were aliens and foreigners, instead of brethren and sisters in a common Lord.

But in yonder bright and happy home, discord, division, separation will be known no more. Once within that sacred portal, the exclamation

will pass from tongue to tongue—"What! so long together on the pilgrimage, and maintaining a cold and chilling reserve and alienation! Alas! is it only now we are to begin to know what we should have known ages ago, 'how good and how pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!'"

Ye who are mourning over these sad estrangements in the Church of God, rejoice at this glorious prospect. All shall be *one* then! *One* house—*one* home—*one* Father—*one* Elder Brother—*one* motive for praise—*one* theme for eternal song—a united Church under its one glorious and glorified Head!

"At Home with Jesus! He who went before,
For His own people Mansions to prepare;
The soul's deep longings still'd, its conflicts o'er,
All rest and blessedness with Jesus there.
What Home like this can the wide earth afford?
'So shall we be for ever with the Lord.'"



V.



Many Mansions.

“What though the tempest rage—
Heaven is my home!
Short is my pilgrimage—
Heaven is my home!
And Time’s wild wintry blast
Soon shall be overpast;
I shall reach *Home* at last—
Heaven is my home!”

“In my Father’s house there are many mansions.”—
JOHN xiv. 2.

IN our last, we considered the “many mansions” of coming glory as betokening *Multiplicity—Permanency—Diversity—Unity.*

Let us revert to the same figure, as still further suggestive of SAFETY.

Where can a child be so safe as in his *Father’s house*? Trials, buffetings, discouragements, un-

kindness he may experience elsewhere, *here* at least he is secure and happy.

What music is there even on earth in that word "*Home!*" The garner of happiness—the haunt of tender affections—the cherisher of bright hope—the hallowed spot where the spent spirit's weary wing folds itself to rest—the glad retreat in "the dark and cloudy day." What must be the Home of Heaven? With what surpassing tenderness does that one word invest these many mansions, "*My Father's house!*" and how does it link us to the Saviour, when He thus addresses each heavenward and homeward-bound pilgrim—"My Father and *your* Father, *my* God and *your* God!" (John xx. 17.)

To enter Heaven, the dwelling-place of the great Jehovah,—to be ushered into the presence-chamber of "the High and Lofty One who inhabiteth eternity!"—there might be much to awe and overwhelm the spirit in such a contemplation. But this beauteous *home-word* deprives it of all its awfulness, and invests it with all that is winning and captivating. Each believer, in the prospect of these bright mansions, may,

without irreverence, adopt the words of the Redeemer, and say, "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto '*my Father*.'"

Would that we oftener realised Heaven as such; and, amid earth's troubles and vicissitudes and sorrows, were led to regard every new trial, every new epoch of existence, every returning week and month and anniversary, as fresh chimes of celestial music floating from the towers of glory, and sounding in our ears, "Nearer home, nearer home!" Our Lord has taught us, while we "desire" in our daily prayer "a better country," to make it a *filial* aspiration—"Our Father, which art in heaven," "Thy kingdom come." Heaven, in the noblest sense, is "*the Church in the House*," (Col. iv. 15.)

The verse still further speaks of HONOUR.

It speaks of admission into God's presence, and to stand in that presence in the relation of children to a father. Even to be laid, like Lazarus, at the portals of heaven, and fed with the crumbs falling from the table, would have been more than what, as sinners, we deserve. What will it

be to be "*within* the house," honoured with a place at the King's own banquet?

There are two Greek words (*δοῦλος* and *δούκονος*) used in the New Testament to describe the believer's relation to God. Both are significant. The former literally means a *slave*, and such His redeemed child really is. He is the willing slave of righteousness, "bought with a price" by a gracious Master. He feels it to be alike his highest honour and obligation to be called "the *servant* of God." The other word, though translated by the same term, (servant,) has a higher meaning. It has rather reference to the believer's heavenly calling. It speaks of His lofty designation and employment in His Father's house, when He becomes a "ministering one," (John xii. 26.) His earthly service is over—"Henceforth I call you not servants, but friends," (John xv. 15.)

"*In my Father's house!*" "Yes," said a dying believer, as he quoted these words; "our Lord tells me, You have been an out-door servant long enough, I will now make you an in-door servant, and take you out of the wind and rain,

to give you a glorified body and better wages and a better mansion." *

What a wondrous transition from the clay tenement to the everlasting mansions! Well may the poet exclaim, apostrophising the emancipated spirit:—

“O change! O wondrous change!
Burst are the prison-bars—
This moment there—so low,
In mortal prayer—and now,
Beyond the stars!

“O change! stupendous change!
There lies the senseless clod—
The soul from bondage breaks,
The new immortal wakes,
Awakes with God!”

Finally, the verse tells us that all these wondrous home-mansions JESUS *has gone to make ready for us.*

“I go to prepare a place for you.” Nay, more, He confers them as a right. He speaks as the “Heir of all things.” Observe, it is not “*your* Father’s house,” but “*my* Father’s house.” As “the Son of the everlasting God,” He seems

* Memoir of Rev. W. Howels.

to say, "I am not ashamed to call you brethren; and for my sake He will not be ashamed to own and welcome you as sons and daughters. My name, as 'the Beloved of the Father,' and my work, as the surety Redeemer, will form a passport and title to every room in these paternal halls!"

The value of a gift is enhanced by the character and worth of the donor. The gift of an earthly sovereign would be highly prized. Here is a gift bestowed by the "Prince of the kings of the earth," purchased by blood and toil and agony. These blood-bought mansions form the crown and consummation of all His other gifts. "This is *THE gift*, that God has given us *eternal life*, and that life is in His Son." "Everything else that He 'did and taught and suffered,' had a reference to the opening of the kingdom of heaven to all believers. His coming *from* heaven was to shew heaven *to* us. His going again there was to prepare a place *for* us. His sitting at the right hand of God is to promote our interest in heaven. His coming in judgment is to take us back with Him to it." *

* Dr Manton.

If He be gone "to prepare this place" for us, be it ours to endeavour to be prepared for "the place;" seeking every returning morning to have our tent pitched "a day's march nearer home,"—nearer the house of our Father. "Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry," (Heb. x. 37.) "He will not stay," says Goodwin, "a minute longer than needs must. He tarries only till He hath, throughout all ages, by His intercession, prepared every room for each saint, that He may entertain them altogether, and have them all about Him."

And shall we pause to ask, Where is that glorious home? where these sparkling waters, these palms ever green, these robes ever bright? Does the spirit at the hour of death wing its arrowy flight to some distant province of creation? Or may Heaven be some mysterious, impalpable spirit-world around us? Though we hear no gush of the crystal waters, and gaze on no "city of the crystal sea," may it not be that angel-wings are hovering over us, and that it is only these dull senses of ours that hide from us the celestial vision?

But what though we can descry no dim outline of the everlasting hills? What though we look in vain for the lights gleaming in the distant windows of these "many mansions?" It is enough to know that *One* has gone to prepare them for us. And *when* completed, His voice will be heard, saying, "Come, for all things are ready!" "THEN *shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of THEIR FATHER,*" (Matt. xiii. 43.)

"Here in an inn a stranger dwelt,
Here joy and grief by turns he felt:
Poor dwelling, now we close thy door!
The task is o'er,
The sojourners return no more.

"Now of a lasting *Home* posselt,
He goes to seek a better rest.
Yes, for each saint doth Christ prepare
A place with care;
Thy Home is waiting, brother, there!"



VI.



Joyful Reunions.

“Hast thou embraced them there,
Thy kindred, tenants of yon world of bliss?
Oh, say—do angels share
The sympathies so sweetly sown in this?
The nurtured 'neath one roof—one native sky—
Meet they with changeless love where every tear
is dry?”

“And so shall *we* ever be with the Lord.”—

I THESS. iv. 17.



OUR fondest wishes respond in the affirmative. The noblest affections and emotions of our immortal natures indorse the poet's utterances. Our Bibles, in manifold direct as well as indirect passages, foster the inspiring hope that the hallowed intimacies of earth will be renewed and perpetuated in glory. The thought of the loved and lost—now the loved and glorified—being “*the loved and known*

again!”—does not this tinge our every anticipation of heaven with a golden hue, and form a new and holy link binding us to the throne of God!

Our blessed Lord Himself, alike by His discourses and His example, has strengthened our belief in the future reunion and recognition of saints. He speaks of “Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” as distinct persons in “the Kingdom of Heaven,” (Matt. viii. 11.) He speaks of “the beggar”—the identical person laid on earth at “the rich man’s gate”—now in “Abraham’s bosom,” (Luke xvi. 23.) When He comforted the hearts of the bereaved sisters of Bethany, His consolatory announcement was, not “*Lazarus* shall rise,” but “Your *brother* shall rise again,” (John xi. 23.) The old hallowed earthly link of affection was to be restored at the Great Day;—the brother of the earthly was to be known and welcomed as brother in the heavenly home! On Mount Tabor, Moses and Elias came down, in form and feature the same as they were when they dwelt in their earthly tabernacles, (Matt. xvii. 3.) Could we venture the strange

conjecture that their recognised identity was a mere accommodation for the ecstatic scene ;—that, though known for that little while to themselves and the disciples, when the vision passed away they again melted into shades—their hallowed fellowship ceasing as they returned to the spirit-world? We cannot think so. We speak of “the communion of saints” in the Church below. We know how blessed it is when in sacred bonds of gospel fellowship, even in a world of imperfection, spirit is linked to spirit. Some of the holiest moments of earth are those in which the children of God “take sweet counsel together,” and unburden into one another’s ears the experience of their Lord’s faithfulness and love. Shall all this terminate at the hour of death? Are pilgrim-spirits, who have wept and prayed and rejoiced together,—mutual helpers till they reached the very gates of glory,—are they—just when the object of their united hopes and prayers is attained—when the crown is in sight—to exchange a cheerless farewell? Are they to be permitted to walk to “the house of God in company” on earth, but forbidden to do

so in Heaven? We cannot think so! Shall Martha, and Mary, and Lazarus have no happiness there in recounting Bethany-scenes of love and friendship? Shall the Marys have no wondrous joy in retraversing in thought their way to the tomb? Shall the disciples (no longer disconsolate) be forbidden to retrace together in glory their steps on the Emmaus road, and at the mutual recital, cause their hearts again to burn within them? (Luke xxiv. 32.) We cannot think so! We cannot suppose that all the rills of earth's purest spiritual enjoyment would thus in a moment be so strangely cut off. All one's idea of Heaven is, that it is an expansion and amplification of whatever on earth is "pure, good, lovely, and of good report." "If it be a happiness," says Baxter, "to live with the saints in their imperfection, where they have sin to embitter, what will it be to live with them in their perfection, when saints are only and wholly saints?" On earth, the accidental meetings of youth not unfrequently ripen, as years roll on, into hallowed intimacies. If we view the present world as the childhood of immortality,—the

infancy of endless life,—may we not picture its incipient attachments reaching their prime in that glorious manhood of being! The reverse of all we have now said would involve a total extinction of the most exalted feelings of our nature. Earthly friendship is one of the flowers of heaven,—an exotic growing in the crevices of man's rocky heart;—it will be nurtured (surely not extirpated) in its native clime. Jesus Himself experienced and cherished its hallowed influence;—He Himself reposed under this solitary column in the ruined temple of humanity. He has left *Bethany* behind Him as the memorial of the purest friendship earth ever witnessed; and while all the disciples were dearly loved by Him, there were congenialities and idiosyncrasies in the spirit of the "*Disciple of love*" which drew the Master to him specially as "*His own*."

What *Jesus* hallowed by His own example, shall we count it *unhallowed* to cherish when we meet Him and His in glory?

Paul invites us to entertain the same consoling assurance. He himself looked forward to his

joy and crown. What was it? "YE *in the presence of the Lord Jesus!*" (1 Thes. ii. 19.) "YE." He had individual churches and members of these churches in his eye. He looked forward (can we doubt it?) to retrace many a hallowed scene in his and their chequered earthly path. How fondly he clung to the intimacies of his apostleship! How "his spirit had no rest because he found not Titus his brother!" (2 Cor. ii. 13.) How Luke lightened his toilsome journey! How Epaphroditus and Timothy cheered his imprisonment! How the brethren from *Appii Forum* kindled the waning lustre of his dimmed eye! (Acts xxviii. 15.) Shall that sympathetic spirit sympathise no more in a better and brighter world with those with whom he toiled in the great work of the apostolate here? Shall all those for whom he laboured and travailed until Christ was formed in them, be unknown to him beyond the grave? Is this mighty star to dwell apart in the spiritual firmament, and never recognise again the many who, by its earthly shining, were "turned to righteousness?" Nay, rather may we not think of him as a spiritual father

gathering his myriad children around him in glory, rejoicing in the permanency of friendships, which on earth were oft unstable? No Demas now to forsake him;—no “present evil world” to lure from his constancy. We may think of him as the sun of a little “system” of saints,—redeemed planets clustering around him,—bound to one another by that still closer and holier tie which binds them all to Jesus. And, just as astronomers tell us that our own is a mere integral part of a mightier astral system, of which Alcyone in the Pleiades is the wondrous centre;—so, while they who “turn many to righteousness” shall “shine as the fixed stars” (central suns) “for ever and ever;”—these are but subordinates—owning the presence and power of a mightier Lord,—the great Alcyone (if we can with reverence use the simile) of the Heavenly system, who binds all together by the gravitation of His own supreme Love!

Yes! I fondly cling to the hope (the *belief*) that in Heaven there will be joyful reunions and recognitions, in which the tear of bereavement shall never more dim the eye, and the tramp of

the funeral crowd shall never more be heard. To imagine the reverse would, I repeat, be doing violence to all the analogies of earth and all the deepest emotions of our moral and social natures. We may exult in the anticipation of pouring into other hearts the story of redeeming love, and singing "the new song" in concert with voices that have been attuned with our own to it here! If even the Patriarchs, the pilgrim-fathers of earlier times, exulted at death in the thought of being "*gathered to their people*," shall we, as Christians, be denuded of this consolatory hope? No, no. The grave will not be permitted to efface the memorials of the past, and destroy our personal identity. The resurrection-body will wear its old smiles of love and tenderness. "*Them also that sleep in Jesus* (lit., *laid to sleep by Jesus*) *will God bring with Him.*" It is the mother hushing her infant in its night-cradle, to rise the same as it lay down, in the morning-light of immortality. Friend will embrace friend, —parent will embrace child,—and child embrace parent!

"Oh, when a mother meets on high
The child she lost in infancy,
Has she not then, for pains and fears,
The day of woe—the watchful night—
For all her sorrows and her tears—
An overpayment of delight?"

"*So shall WE ever be with the Lord!*" It will be no dreamy solitude—no hermit life. Ever and anon we may imagine groups of the redeemed, known to one another on earth, hushing the music of the universal song, and retiring to hold peaceful fellowship beside the still fountains of water;—there refreshing their spirits with the memories of Time;—and, after the sacred recitals, returning again to resume, with deeper cadence, the lofty anthem.

Nor need we so limit these ennobled friendships as to restrict them to that of contemporary and personal acquaintance. May we not rather picture them as embracing the vast multitude of pious dead, whose names (though they lived in other lands and centuries) are among us as "household words;"—those whose example has animated our faith, quickened our love, and

who, though dead, have been long heard to speak! Think of the untold joy of being ushered into the glorified presence and fellowship of such as Abraham, and Moses, and David, and Paul, and John! Think of the lesser cloud of witnesses, in times nearer our own. Sainted men; the modern *Stephens* who have suffered;—the *Enochs* who have walked with God;—burning and shining lights, whose words and deeds have embalmed them in our dearest memories! How the heart bounds at the thought of this wondrous expansion of friendship in its noblest form; associated, in the sublime services of the upper sanctuary with the Great and Good of every successive age in the Church's history;—"the glorious company of the apostles, the goodly fellowship of the prophets, the noble army of martyrs!" We have but traced while on earth their "footsteps on the sands of time;" what will it be to stand with them on the shores of the glassy sea, and to sing together the "Song of Moses, the servant of God, and the Song of the Lamb!"

Christian! these lines may at present express
the sad musings of your desolate heart:—

“‘Silently the shades are falling
Round my lonely, childless door,
Loved and cherish’d ones recalling
Who on earth I’ll meet no more.’

“Oh, not ‘lost,’ but ‘gone before us,’
They can never be forgot ;
Heaven’s bright mansions shall restore us,
In sweet ties which perish not!”

Yes! Live under the cheering hope of a joyful
reunion with the white-robed multitude, and the
dearer and tenderer hope of meeting with those
who on earth have joyed with you in all your
spiritual joys, and shared with you in your
sorrows. Think of those spoken of as taking
part in the sublime closing gospel invitation—
“*The BRIDE says, Come!*” *The Bride!* It is the
Church triumphant! and *in* that Church beloved
ones, silent on earth, but whose beaming spirits
in “the better land” are beckoning you up-
wards to exult in ties that shall never know
dissolution.

“Hast thou not glimpses, in the twilight hour,
Of mountains where immortal morn prevails ?
Comes there not, through the silence, to thine ear
A gentle rustling of the morning gale—
A murmur wafted from that glorious shore
Of streams that water banks for ever fair—
And voices of the loved ones gone before,
More musical in that celestial air ?”

They beckon you to fresh ardour in running
your Christian race! Think of them crowding
the walls of glory—eager to welcome those
they have left for a little behind them, to buffet
the wilderness-storms—waiting to lead them,
hand in hand, up the golden streets! Think of
them seated on the everlasting hills, tracing to-
gether every rill and streamlet in the “nether
valley,” and acknowledging how *all* had been
combining mysteriously for good. Meanwhile,
as you gather and taste this grape of the Hea-
venly Vintage, let it refresh your spirit, and
cheer your footsteps towards your joyous home!
A royal mourner, as he wept over a rosebud
prematurely plucked, has left a brief motto-verse
for all who have nameless treasures IN the tomb

and BEYOND the tomb—"I MAY GO TO HIM!"
(2 Sam. xii. 23.)

"Yes! the hour—the hour is haſting, .
 Spirit *ſhall* with ſpirit blend ;
Faſt mortality is waſting,
 Then the ſecret all ſhall end !
Let, then, thought hold ſweet communion,
 Let us breathe the mutual prayer,
Till in heaven's eternal union,
 Oh, my friend ! to meet thee there !"



VII.



"But anguish no more fetters thee,
For now thou art awake and free ;
And as on thy enraptured sight
Bursts that new world of living light,
Through every nerve what rapture thrills,
And all thy inmost being fills!"

—THOLUCK'S *"Hours of Devotion."*

"The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick."—

ISAIAH xxxiii. 24.

SUFFERING believers, laid on beds of languishing, can alone appreciate the sweetness of this gleanings from the Eshcol-clusters.

How many of God's children are at this moment tossed on couches of distress, shut out from the light and sunshine of a busy world,—their experience that of the afflicted patriarch of Uz, —"*I am made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed unto me. When I*

lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day," (Job vii. 3, 4.)

But in yonder bright world of purity and love, "*there shall be no more pain,*" (Rev. xxi. 4.) How often on the earthly sick-bed is the patient grateful for a single hour's release from poignant suffering! What will it be in that glorious land where not so much as one pang shall ever be experienced! *Here*, how much is present happiness clouded by real or imaginary apprehensions. How often are the strong and robust and vigorous haunted with the dread that their strength may be prostrated. Even when life's sun is shining most brightly, the intrusive thought *will* steal across the spirit, that this lease of long health may not always last. How often, too, have these foreshadowings been too truthfully verified; either we ourselves laid low with sickness, or else brought to watch with agonising anxiety by the couch of some beloved relative! Oh, the blessedness of a world where the *fear* of *fearful* things will be unknown;—where nothing shall ruffle our deep, everlasting repose! No Lazarus can be laid

at Heaven's gate "full of sores." No sunny countenance in a moment shrouded with paleness. No elastic step arrested with the spoiler's touch, and the brightness of morning changed into the shadow of death. The suffering caused by accident, the infirmities of age, the decay of intellectual vigour, the oppression on the spirit by sudden bereavement—all will be strange in that unsuffering state. We know that sickness, in addition to its own attendant pain and uneasiness, unfits both mind and body for active duty and service. The emaciated, languid invalid is like the wounded bird struggling with disabled wing in the furrow, and attempting, in vain, its former joyous soaring. But in Heaven nothing can weaken or impair the immortal energies. No longer will the renovated framework be the prey of disease, or subject to decay. No longer will there arise feverish anxieties about others;—those moments of dread suspense that seem more like *hours*, when life, and all that life counts dear, is "balanced in a breath." Over the earthly portals is written, "*We have the sentence of death in ourselves,*" (2 Cor. i. 9.) Over the gate of heaven,

"Neither shall they die any more," (Luke xx. 36.)

And how will this exemption from present experiences of suffering and pain be secured? How will the new heavens and the new earth give forth no longer, as here, a plaintive "*miserere?*" Let the words following our motto-verse explain, "*The people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.*" It is *Sin* which has made this world of ours dim with weeping. The glimmering lamp in every sufferer's chamber reads, in its sickly hue, the sad tale of transgression. It is *sin* that is forcing from his lips the plaintive soliloquy, "Would God it were evening! would God it were morning!" (Deut. xxviii. 67.) Here, and by reason of sin, the body is, in its every pore and muscle, susceptible of pain. Its nervous fibres can, in a moment, become chords of anguish. Science may be prodigal of her inventions to mitigate disease in its thousand insidious forms, but still "the head will be sick," "the heart faint," the body bowed with suffering, the healthy cheek furrowed with age; "the keepers

of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves," (Eccles. xii. 3.) All the marvels and mysteries of the healing art in vain can stem the tide of distress, quicken the ebbing pulses of life, ward off the bitter parting, or reanimate the silent ashes. Gourds are still withering; buds of promise are still drooping to decay; the wail of anguished humanity is loud as ever. Not till the morning of a sinless immortality dawn, will the tongue of the sufferer be tuned to the better melody—"The days of our mourning are for ever ended."

Happy, happy prospect! "*The inhabitant shall no more say, I am sick.*" Ye who are now laid on beds of languishing and pain, listen to this. Now, as the shadows of each returning evening begin to fall, you may have nothing but gloomy anticipations. The morrow's light, which brings health and joy to a busy world, may bring nothing to you but fresh prostration and anguish. Sabbath comes round, but its once joyous bells ring only in your ears the memory of forfeited joys;—the lonely bird, still pining in its earthly

cage, wailing, in muffled notes, "Oh that I could flee away from this weary prison-house of sorrow and pain, and be at rest!"

Yes! but that rest is at hand. Soon will you mount on eagle's wings to these golden gates. Pilgrims, now oft pacing along the wilderness-path with bleeding feet and fevered brow, the thorny path will soon be over. No more pain to harass you. No more "archers" to wound you. No more languor to depress you. "The former things shall have passed away." How will one moment in that sorrowless heaven lead you to forget your present long experience of prostration and suffering! It will appear in the retrospect only as the shadow of a passing cloud,—a dream of the night which the morning light has dispelled;—voices on all sides sounding in your ears, "*There shall be no more curse,*" (Rev. xxii. 3.)

Meanwhile, as you lie tossing on your sick-bed, seek to ask, not, "Am I getting the better of my pain?" but, "Am I made the better *for* it? Is it executing the great mission for which it has

been sent of God? Is it sanctifying me, purging away the dross, and fitting me for glory?" He has some wise end in view in laying you upon the bed of languishing. Sickness is one of His own chosen messengers,—one of the arrows of His quiver. As the mother lavishes her tenderest affection on her invalid child, so may it be truthfully said regarding the suffering believer, "Lord, he *whom thou lovest* is sick," (John xi. 3.) He takes you apart,—secludes you from the world, that through the rents of your shattered earthly tabernacle He may give you glimpses of coming glory. When your tongue is "failing you for thirst," He brings grapes, plucked by His own hand, from Canaan. Your soul, like that of aged Jacob, revives!

How often has the couch of suffering thus been made as the very gate of heaven. Be assured you will yet come to acknowledge infinite mercy in this very discipline. In preparing to transplant His own tree to paradise,—instead of cutting you down, or wrenching you up by the roots,—hurrying you away without a note of

warning into an unprovided-for eternity,—He is pruning branch by branch, that you may fall gently. He is “purging you, that you may bring forth more fruit,” (John xv. 2.) Seek to exhibit the grace of *patience* under your trial. This is one of the few Christian virtues which can only be manifested on earth. In Heaven there is no suffering to call forth its exercise. “Let patience” now therefore “have its perfect work.” Seek to feel that the end your God has in these “light afflictions” is to work out for you “a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory,” (2 Cor. iv. 17.) Tossed on this troubled sea, let the eye and the longings of faith frequently rest on the quiet haven. “Oh, the blessed tranquillity of that region,” says Richard Baxter,—himself no stranger to a couch of prolonged distress,—“where there is nothing but sweet, continued peace! O healthful place where none are sick! O happy land, where all are kings! O holy assembly, where all are priests! How free a state, where none are servants but to their supreme Monarch! . . . O my

soul, bear with the infirmities of thine earthly tabernacle ! It will be thus but a little while. The sound of my Redeemer's feet is even at the door."

"And heaven hath rest—the Sabbath of the sky !
No weary feet shall walk the world on high ;
No tear of trouble falls
Within those jasper walls—
To gain this rest for me did Jesus die."





VIII.



The Death of Death.

“ See the haven full in view,
Love divine shall bear thee through.
Saints in glory, perfect made,
Wait thy passage through the shade.
Ardent for thy coming o’er,
See, they throng the blissful shore !”

“ He shall swallow up death in victory.”—ISA. xxv. 8.



VICTORY is a cheering word! Joyous is the return to their own land of a band of warriors after a long and triumphant campaign. Inspiring are the hosannas of welcome poured upon them by an applauding country; and sweeter still the music of home-voices. The memory of past toil and suffering is forgotten, or remembered only to enhance the gladness of reunion!

What shall it be when the Christian, freed

from the last conflict, enters the gates of the Heavenly City, the hofannas of angels and saints resounding through the streets of the new Jerusalem! Each toil-worn warrior bathing his wounds in the river of the water of life—death-divided friends gathered to welcome him to his everlasting home!

Looking back from the heights of glory on earth's long battle-field; it is a gloomy and chequered retrospect of stern foes, stubborn temptations, mountains of difficulties that had to be climbed, valleys of humiliation that had to be descended—ay, and the sadder memory of unwatchfulness and betrayal, temporary defeat and disaster. But all is now crowned with "VICTORY," and the last and most recent foe—*Death* itself—disarmed.

How great the contrast NOW and THEN!

Now, alas! he is the unsparing invader of every household; all our precautions, all our wisest human expedients in vain are employed to disarm him of his power, and arrest his advancing footsteps. He reigns on earth with a terrible ubiquity! He comes in the hour least

expected—often just when the fondest visions of earthly joy are being realifed.

Do we think of it—we who may be living all carelefs and thoughtlefs, lulled by the dream of prosperity, prefuming on our prefent cloudlefs horizon—that each moment, with fleeplefs vigilance, the stealthy foe is creeping nearer and nearer?—that the fmooth current is gliding flowly but furely onward and ftill onward towards the brink of the cataract, where all at once the irrevocable leap will and *muft* be taken?

Reader, perchance you can even now tell the tale! You may at prefent be reading it, or you may have recently done fo, with tearful eyes and a breaking heart. You may be marking the vacant feat at your table, miffing the accents of fome well-known voice, or the found of fome well-remembered footfall; a beaming eye in your daily walk may be gone, and *gone* forth for ever of time! What other antidote for hearts fmitten down by thefe fimoom-blafts which leave earth a blackened wildernefs—but a look *beyond*, to that Better Land, where this enemy's power is neither felt nor feared? In that glorious refur-

rection-morning, the sceptre which he has wielded for six thousand years will be wrested from his grasp, and that chorus will begin for which centuries of suffering hearts have been wistfully longing, "*O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?*" (1 Cor. xv. 55.) Sounding trumpets commenced the song of the Lord in the temple of old, (2 Chron. xxix. 27.) It was a type of a mightier festival in the temple of glory. "The trump of God" is to sound *first*. Slumbering millions will start at the summons, "*Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust!*" (Isa. xxvi. 19.) Believer! seek to contemplate death from the *heavenward* side, as a foe doomed and conquered. If you are now in Jesus, victory over death is yours by anticipation. You cannot sing the song of victory *completed*; but you can be weaving the garlands of triumph, and tuning your harp for the prophetic strain! The garden of the Pagan Hesperides was said to be watched by a dragon. But although death is between us and the heavenly paradise, the monster's sting has been plucked away, and cast into the flames of the Saviour's sacrifice. *Safe in Christ!—then,*

indeed, is death difarmed of its real terrors. It becomes a stupendous triumphal arch, through which God's redeemed legions pass into glory. A dark Valley, but bridged by the bow of promise, with its radiant hues of love, and joy, and peace! Lean on the promises now; they alone will support you in the hour of death, and prove to you, like Elijah's horses and chariots of fire. Living now near to Jesus, you will have nothing to do when the last solemn hour *does* arrive, but to step into these chariots, and be upborne by angels to your Father's house!

O blissful consummation! once across *that threshold*, and every remembrance of sadness which death generates here, and which often makes life one valley of Baca—one "vale of weeping"—will be obliterated, and that *for ever!* No sun going down "while it is yet day;" no glory of manhood suddenly eclipsed; no early blossoms nipped in the bud; no venerable trees, under whose shadow we have long reposed, succumbing to the axe of the Destroyer. Viewing death from the *earthly* side, it seems the mournful "exodus of life,"—the fatal extinguisher,

the dread annihilator of fondest hopes and purest happiness. Taking the *heavenward* view, it is what Matthew Henry significantly calls "the parenthesis of being." It is the bridge from the finite to the infinite; the birthday of immortality; the momentary rasping of the shallows in entering the quiet haven; the day which, while it terminates the joys of the worldling, only truly begins those of the believer!

Suffering saints of God! ye who may have been "tossed about with a great fight of afflictions," long out on the stormy sea, neither sun nor stars appearing, and, like the seamen in *Adria* of old, "wistfully looking for the day,"—be comforted. Each day is bringing you nearer and nearer these peaceful shores. You may even now be discovering indications that you cannot be far from the desired port!

It is beautifully recorded by the biographer of Columbus, that, as he was approaching the hitherto unknown confines of the new world, "one day, at sunrise, some rushes, recently torn up, were seen near the vessel; a plank, evidently hewn by an axe; a stick, skilfully carved by

some cutting instrument; a bough of hawthorn in blossom; and, lastly, a bird's neat-built nest on a branch which the wind had broken, and full of eggs, on which the parent bird was sitting amidst the gently rolling waves, were seen floating past upon the waters! The sailors brought on board these living and inanimate witnesses of their approach to land. They were a voice from the shore confirming the assurances of Columbus. The pilots and seamen, clinging about the masts, yards, and shrouds, each tried to keep the best place, and the closest watch, to get the earliest sight of the new hemisphere. . . . Delicious and unknown perfumes reached the vessels from the dim outlines of the shore, with the roar of the waves upon the reefs, and the soft land-breeze. In a few hours his foot trod the sands of a new world!"—(See Lamartine's "Columbus.") Beautiful picture of a nearing heaven! "Afflicted, tempest-tossed, and not comforted," "lift up your heads with joy, for your redemption draweth nigh!" (Luke xxi. 28.) Yet a little while and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Every new sorrow that visits you; every new

season which passes over you; every friend taken from you;—these are so many silent messengers from the shores of glory, whispering, “*Nearer eternity!*” Time itself seems not to be without significant monitors—signals scattered on its ocean that “the day is at hand!” Prophecy is fast fulfilling. There are those who, from the shrouds and rigging, can descry, in the hazy distance, the dim outline of a more glorious hemisphere than that of earth—“the *new world*”—even “the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness!” (2 Pet. iii. 13.)

“*And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and THERE SHALL BE NO MORE DEATH, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more*

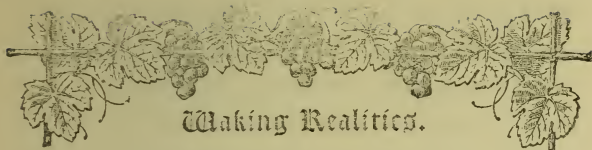
vain: for the former things are passed away,"
(Rev. xxi. 1, 3, 4.)

"Then, looking up through sorrow's night,
We trace the spirit's homeward flight;
The Prince of Life has mark'd that road,
Through the Dark Valley, home to God.

"Where once the Master lowly lay,
Let the tired servant rest to-day;
And in the Father's house above,
For ever share the Master's love."



IX.



Waking Realities.

“ Whilst I see Thy love to me,
Every object teems with joy ;
Here, oh may I walk with Thee,
Then into Thy presence die !

“ Thee to praise, and Thee to know,
Constitute my bliss below ;
Thee to see, and Thee to love,
Constitute my bliss above.”

TOPLADY.

“ I shall be satisfied, when I awake, in thy likeness.”—
PSALM xvii. 15.



WHAT a glorious awaking, after earth's
unquiet dream ! *With God ! Like God !*

Happiness has been well defined to
be “ the coincidence of the finite will with the
Infinite.” On earth that coincidence is never
perfect. There are disturbing forces in the moral
atmosphere tempting the soul ever and anon,

like some wandering planet, to break loose from the sphere of the Divine favour, and pursue a devious and erratic orbit. Strange, indeed, that, despite of lessons constantly enforced, it should cling so fondly to the delusion that there *are* elements of heart-satisfying happiness independent of God. Vain thought! Even when the objects on which the affections are lavished seem the purest and noblest, there is ever a consciousness of unfated longings, yearnings after *something* better, which earth cannot give. In this chase after happiness *a* point may be reached, but not *the* point. In grasping the imaginary good, it is but a shadow. It appeared, in approaching, fair and captivating. It proved, in reality, a piece of fairy frost-work; on touching it, it fell.

But in Heaven the coincidence will be complete. Man's will and love will there be entirely subordinate to the will and love of God. The lineaments of the Divine image, erased and effaced at the Fall, will be there again imprinted. There will be no competing affection to alienate

from the great Source of happiness,—no vacuum requiring aught else to fill it. The rills will be unneeded in the presence of the great Fountain-Head,—Him who is “essential love, essential goodness, essential glory.” “Lord,” says Augustine, “Thou hast made us *for* Thee, and our heart is unquiet until it reposeth *in* Thee!” Those immortal powers and energies and affections made *for* God, will then repose for ever *in* God. There will be nothing more to be desired or longed for; and the rejoicing soul, gazing around on the floods of the excellent glory, will be able to say, “I am satisfied!”

“Once I dreamed,” says Payson, “of being transported to heaven; and being surprised to find myself so calm and tranquil in the midst of my happiness, I inquired the cause. The reply was, When you were on earth, you resembled a bottle but partly filled with water, which was agitated by the least motion—now you are like the same bottle filled to the brim, which cannot be disturbed.” Yes! *then* every soul will become a temple, and its distinguishing glory will be

that of Solomon's on the day of consecration—"the house was filled with *the glory of the Lord!*" (1 Kings viii. 11.) Other and minor sources of happiness there may be. There may be the waving of incense, sounds of sweet melody, the high praises of God chanted by a mighty multitude which no man can number, and the lofty companionship of cherubim and seraphim; but the believer's pre-eminent dignity and blessedness will consist in his own soul becoming a consecrated shrine for the mystic Shekinah—"God dwelling in *him*, and *he* in *God*."

Reader! whatever be the Divine dealings and discipline in fitting thee for such a Heaven, and such a likeness, submit to them. To employ a well-known but beautiful illustration:—The refining of silver is not complete, until the refiner beholds his own image reflected brightly in the fused metal. And if He who calls Himself "a Refiner of silver" keep thee long in the crucible,—subject thee for long to the furnace,—it is only that every grain and speck of alloy may be purged away, and that in Heaven thou mayest

awake rejoicing, and "satisfied" in "His likeness."

What a glorious, what a strange transformation! Who would recognise the spirit that is now chafed and buffeted with temptation and sin, corruption and iniquity, then made resplendent with the image of a holy God? As the shapeless, unseemly root of the flower or plant struggling amid rubbish and stones and cheerless darkness, after fastening its fibres in the soil, sends up a graceful stalk, efflorescing in loveliness and beauty, its leaves waving in the sunlight, and filling the summer air with their fragrance;—so will it be with the soul. It is here sown in corruption. **I**t fastens its roots in a world dark and cheerless, by reason of sin. Its immortal fibres are nursed and disciplined amid trials and sorrows, difficulties and perplexities. It is soiled and degraded with the corruptible elements through which it has to fight its upward way. But there is a glorious summer-time at hand, when the root thus nurtured shall burst its mortal coil, and its leaves and blossoms shall not

only be bathed in the hues of heaven, but their every tint will be resplendent with a glory reflected from the Great Source of all light and joy.



X.



“ Brief life is here our portion,
 Brief sorrow, short-lived care :
 The life that knows no ending,
 The tearless life, is there.
 There, glory yet unheard of
 Shall shed abroad its ray,
 Resolving all enigmas,—
 An endless Sabbath-day.”
 —BERNARD of Cluny, 12th century.

“ Now we see through a glass, darkly, but then face to face.”—1 COR. xiii. 12.

WHAT an extension in the domain of *knowledge* on that blessed morning when “ the day shall break,” and earth’s twilight shadows shall “ flee away for ever.” The mysteries in Providence, the “ deep things ” in Scripture, the apparent discrepancies in God’s moral government, all unfolded, vindicated, explained. “ In thy light,” O God, we shall “ see light,” (Ps. xxxvi. 9.)

How this new illumination will be effected we cannot say. We can only venture a few dim conjectures on a great problem which the future itself alone can solve.

Much of our curtailed and partial knowledge here, is owing to the limited range of our present faculties. It is quite possible to conceive in a future world a vast and indefinite extension and amplification of our present mental and bodily powers ; such an amplification as the man born blind experiences when his eyes are opened for the first time, on a world of whose glories he has only been previously cognizant by *hearing* about them. We can quite well imagine some faculty which either we do not now possess, or which hitherto, like the sight of the blind man we have supposed, has been lying sealed and dormant, all at once imparted ;—"eyes of our understanding" opened, which are now closed ;—new powers, shall we say, of thought and reasoning, taking in knowledge at intuition which now requires years of laborious thought. Even in the case of the lower animals, we see powers and instincts which *we* do not possess, but which, if we *did* possess them,

would add incalculably to our capacities. Instance, as familiar examples, the flight of the migratory birds, or that of the bee winging its way to a vast distance from its hive; yet, notwithstanding its tortuous aerial journey, finding, with unerring precision, its way back to the hidden nook whence it started.

The present limited range alike of our physical and moral powers of observation may have been, as an able writer surmises,* the reason why St Paul, when he was caught up into the third heavens, tells us he saw things which it is not "*possible* for a man to utter." Why not *possible*? Simply because he was not gifted with earthly powers or faculties or language capable of giving expression to what he saw. The phenomena of heavenly glory (if I might so call them) were alike, in kind and degree, so diverse from all he had been conversant with here, that he would have needed another dialect and vocabulary to evolve his meaning.

* See Archbishop Whateley's "Scripture Revelations on a Future State,"—a book profoundly thoughtful and suggestive.

"But THEN shall I know!" All enigma and difficulty will then vanish,—all will be made plain to ennobled, refined, and purified powers. Here a passing breath from a carnal world dims my glafs, and obscures my spiritual vision. *There*, there will be no taint of sin to mar or blight my lofty contemplations. *Here*, amid the twilight shadows of an imperfect state there is much to cause doubt, and, alas! disagreement among God's children. *There*, all shall see "eye to eye;" they will only wonder that trifles should have been suffered so sadly to divide and estrange. *Here*, we are in the gloomy crypt, walking amid the humiliating wrecks of sin and death, reading the mysterious records of mortality. *There*, it will be in the "cathedral aisles" of light and love, harmony and peace—the noon-day splendour of eternity. Glorious prospect! all made bright before that Sapphire Throne. That mysterious providence, that desolating bereavement which, like a sweeping avalanche, tore up by the roots the fibres of affection, *then* I shall know, and see, and acknowledge it to have been all for good. Then I shall understand, (what my aching

heart cannot now,) that the child I wept over,—the parent I laid prematurely in the grave,—the friend, early severed from my side,—were all thereby taken from much evil to come, and invested with an earlier bliss. I shall wonder how I could ever have sorrowed on their behalf.

Meanwhile let me bow submissive to my Righteous Father's will, however dark and startling sometimes it may be. In infancy, the child takes much on trust; in after life, he gets his difficulties explained. Let this be my position regarding the "deep things" of providence and grace. Wait patiently the explanation of my Father in heaven. I shall see in the completed plan that all events had their end and mission,—the Lord evolving glory to Himself from all. At present I behold only one or a few links, while He has the whole chain in His hands. Then, in retracing that long line of unbroken kindness, I shall feel satisfied that not only all was *for* the best, but really *the* best. The whole bypast wilderness, as seen from the hills of glory, will appear carpeted with love. Like a traveller after a dark night, I shall look back along the

region I have traversed ; and noting the perils which by His gracious guidance I had escaped, wonder at the way by which God has led me.

Above all, I shall grow in the knowledge of Himself ; and have amazing views—such as I have never had here—of *His glory* as the great end of life and being. Our present knowledge of God, even *revealed* knowledge, is but like the prattling of infancy, a mere *attempt* at a spoken language, most of which is still unintelligible. But *then* I shall be “filled with all the fulness of God.” Not by any means that my knowledge of Him can be perfect. There will always be depths in that ocean-fulness, beyond the fathoming of any finite mind. Nay, further, the *more* I know, the more I shall feel that I *have* to know. When I know most, my befitting exclamation will be, “Oh the depth !” “*It PASSETH knowledge,*” (Eph. iii. 19.)

“This is life eternal to know *Thee*.” God, by His varied discipline, is meanwhile training me in this knowledge. And, as a sainted writer has well said, “we must wait till we get quite home to have lesson-books put by for ever. But what-

ever are the gradations in our books, or in whatever shape the lesson comes to us, this is the one grand blessed object aimed at by our wondrous Teacher in all, '*Acquaint thyself now with HIM, and be at peace.*'"—(Miss Plumptre.)

"No disappointments shroud
The angel-bowers of joy ;
Our knowledge hath no cloud,
Our pleasures no alloy.

"The fearful word, *to part*,
Is never breathed above ;
Heaven hath no broken heart
Throughout her realms of love."



XI.



Unneeded Luminaries.

“Oh, how beautiful that region,
And how fair that heavenly legion,
Where thus men and angels blend !
Glorious will that city be,
Full of deep tranquillity,
Light, and peace, from end to end !
All the happy dwellers there
Shine in robes of purity,
Bound in firmest unity.
Labour finds them not, nor care,
Ignorance can ne’er perplex,
Nothing tempt them, nothing vex ;
Joy and health their fadeless blessing,
Always all things good possessing.”

THOMAS A KEMPIS, 1380.

The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it : for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.”—REV. xxi. 23.



HEAVEN is here compared to a city.
But it is no created orbs, no material
luminaries, which light up its glorious

edifices. These are superseded. There is no longer need of the intervention of *means* as on earth. All the knowledge and light and glory of the Church triumphant emanate direct from the Divine Source of all excellence. The immediate presence of the Creator and the Lamb will render unnecessary every other medium of communication. As a vessel requires props before being launched to sea,—or a house in building requires scaffolding before it can be completed,—so the Church, in its earthly condition, requires the props and scaffolding of ordinances and means of grace. But when the erection is finished—the last stone placed on the consummated structure,—then the scaffolding is removed—it is needed no more. “There shall be no more prayer there,” says Baxter, “because no more necessity; but the full enjoyment of the thing prayed for. God’s *face* shall be the Scripture where we shall read the truth.” We have servants in the lower banqueting-house;—angels are ministering spirits sent forth “to minister to the heirs of salvation.” The Church has ordained office-bearers to carry the vessels of the sanctuary. In Heaven, the

Master "*girds Himself* and serves," (Luke xvii. 8.) *Here* it is *mediately* through the creature our spiritual wants are supplied;—*there* all will be supplied *immediately* from God and the Lamb. It is "THE LAMB who leads to the living fountains of water." It is "*God*" who "wipes away all tears from the eyes!" (Rev. vii. 17.) *Here* the use of means is indispensable. They are adapted for our state of *imperfection*. The infant or sick man cannot bear the full blaze of the sun;—they must have the curtain drawn, or the brightness tempered and subdued; it is only with increasing age or returning health that either are able to look on the light. So in the infancy and weakness of our probation-state we could not bear to gaze on the unveiled majesty of God's glory;—we could not endure its intolerable brightness; it would blind and consume us. The figurative "sun" and "moon" of ordinances are, therefore, graciously appointed for the feebleness of our earthly condition. But when invested with the nobler powers of our heavenly manhood, we shall be able to dispense with these;—we shall be able to draw aside the veil-

ing curtain, which is needed now to subdue and modify, and to gaze with eagle-eye on the brightness of Jehovah's presence. To borrow an apt illustration: None of the lower animals can hold, in the noblest sense of the word, *fellowship* with man, as they are at present constituted; but let one of them have suddenly imparted to it the gift of *reason*, *then* it becomes immediately fitted to do so. So it is with regard to our present and future relation to God. We are unable, with our present limited powers, to hold, in the highest sense, intimate fellowship with Him;—we have the feeblest conceptions of His glory, the most inadequate apprehension of His goodness, and power, and excellency, and majesty. But when we come in a glorified state to have higher and nobler spiritual endowments conferred on us, we shall be able to *see*, as we cannot do now, His glorious perfections, and to *enjoy*, as we cannot do now, His presence and favour, His fellowship and love.

The city will then have no "*need*" of the sun! It is *needed* now;—the softer and more subdued light is required *now*; but earth's darkness will

then be past, and the true Light will shine. We shall be able (without being, like Moses, hidden in the cleft of any sheltering rock) to "see God and live!" (Exod. xxxiii. 20.)

And *what a fellowship* will this be!—The Being of all beings, the Light of all lights! David felt it to be subject-matter of gratitude and joy,—"*I am companion to them that fear thee.*" He had a hallowed joy in the fellowship of kindred spirits on earth. What will it be to be the companion of God Himself?—to be linked with all that is essentially *great*, and *glorious*, and *good*, in the universe:—not only to be brother to the angelic hosts, but, in a higher sense than even the Father of the faithful knew it, "to be called" (and to BE) "the *friend* of God!" If, even on earth, I have known something of Him as my "Light" and my "Salvation,"—if I have seen somewhat of His glory shining through the battered chinks of my ruined soul,—what will it be to bask in the floods of infinite light and love before the Throne? "What can be desired," says one now in the midst of the glorious realities on which he often dwelt, "beyond the bliss

imparted by the consciousness of loving and being loved by Him, in whose smile of love the highest archangels find the very heaven of heaven to consist?"

I shall be independent of all that contributes to light up my earthly pathway. Friends I may have then among the angels—hallowed reunions of earthly affection may and *will* take place in that world of glory; but though I expect to prize and cherish them, I shall have no "NEED" of them. They will be among the "lesser glories," having no glory (comparatively) by reason of "the glory that excelleth." The sunlight and the moonlight will pale into *nothingness* in the presence of mightier beams!

But while I shall be lost in amazement at the exceeding greatness and excellency of this great Being, who is enthroned "in light, inaccessible, and full of glory;"—while all the eloquence of earth that has tried to portray the majesty of His glory will fall immeasurably short;—it will, at the same time, be a *softened* glory. Never, in these sublime pictures of Heaven which we have in the Book of Revelation, is the Lord God

Almighty spoken of but in conjunction with "*the Lamb*." John "saw no temple; the Lord God Almighty and *the Lamb* were the temple," (Rev. xxi. 22.) Now he sees no light. The lustre of earthly sun, and moon, and stars, have faded, and are quenched for ever, but "*the Lord God Almighty AND THE LAMB are the light thereof*." He hears the redeemed multitude sing a lofty anthem, but it is *this*,—" *Salvation to our God that sitteth upon the throne, AND UNTO THE LAMB*," (Rev. vii. 10.) What is the design of this oft-recurring imagery and symbol but to keep ever before the Church, even in its triumphant state, the intervention of a *Mediator*, by whom alone it is that we can *see* God and live? "*The Lamb is the light thereof!*" Calvary's cross and Calvary's Saviour will still be the theme and problem of eternity!

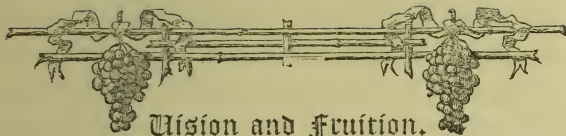
And if light be the emblem of purity, how I ought, in the prospect of such a Heaven and such a Presence, to make it my great ambition to be "*perfecting*" that "*holiness, without which no man can see the Lord!*" (Heb. xii. 14.) Holiness becometh that city! Its gates are never

shut except against sin. Let me seek, as its chartered citizen, that every vestige of the accursed thing be now put away. What a happy world, where temptation shall no longer be felt or feared!—where I shall never more, by reason of sin, be mourning an absent Lord,—never more, in the midst of my own erring estrangements, be uttering the plaintive soliloquy of the patriarch, “*Oh that I knew where I might find HIM!*” but ever reposing in the joyous consciousness, “*I am still with Thee!*”

“With HIM all gather’d! to that blessed home,
Through all its windings, still the pathway tends;
While ever and anon bright glimpses come
Of that fair city where the journey ends.
Where all of bliss is centred in one word,
‘So shall we be for ever with the Lord.’”



XII.



Vision and Fruition.

“So the wish grows deeper, fonder,
Friend of souls! Thy face to see,
In Thy pleasant Salem, yonder,
Where no tear nor sigh may be;
And God’s presence on the sight
Shines in pure unshadow’d light.”

“We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”—
1 JOHN iii. 2.



HIS beautiful verse of John comprises the *two* grand elements of heavenly glory: To “*see* God”—to be “*like* God.” It describes the matured manhood of the Christian.

We are now in a state of infancy and nonage. As a child on earth is incapable of comprehending much that is made plain in after years, so, with regard to divine knowledge, “we know in part, and we prophesy in part,” (1 Cor. xiii. 9.) But in the full development of our spiritual

being we shall "see Him face to face." The earthly prayer will, for the first time, in all its amplitude, be fulfilled—"I beseech thee, shew me thy glory," (Exod. xxxiii. 18.)

See Him! What an advance does this announcement indicate in the moral capacities and privileges of the glorified, beyond what they enjoyed on earth! We cannot bear to look even on the natural sun here; we are dazzled and blinded with his intolerable brightness. But *there*, "the Lord our God" is to be our "everlasting light," (Isa. lx. 20.) The spiritual vision will be enlarged and adapted for the augmented glories of this higher manifestation.

See Him! What an honour! The Jewish High Priest was highly favoured in being permitted, *once a year*, to gaze on the august symbol of the Divine presence—the Temple Shekinah. What will it be to enjoy the eternal and uninterrupted contemplation of the great God Himself—that, too, undimmed by any mystic or shadowy rites; but "with open face," (*lit.* face unveiled,) "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord," (2 Cor. iii. 18.) And it is to "see Him *as He is.*"

Not canopied in clouds and wreathed in rainbow-form, awful, inapproachable;—but God in our nature, “Immanuel, God with us.” It is plain that it is *Jesus* of whom the Apostle of love speaks in our motto-verse. Jesus as He was, and is, and ever shall be—the Elder Brother—the kinsman Redeemer—“the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever,” (Heb. xiii. 8.)

Often are we conscious of the thought presenting itself, “Would that I had been among the number of those who of old were privileged to hear that loving voice, and gaze on that countenance, ‘fairer than the children of men!’ Would that I had sat on the Hill of Beatitudes, and listened to those words of matchless wisdom; or stood by the sea-shore of Gennefaret, or in the graveyard of Bethany, or mingled in the jubilant crowd on Olivet!” This honour is ours in reversion. We *shall* “see the King in His beauty.” “Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh.” “They shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads,” (Rev. xxii. 4.) It will be said of His redeemed people in glory, as the queen of

Sheba said of His earthly type, "Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee!" (1 Kings x. 8.)

"*Like Him!*" This is spoken of here as the second element in Heavenly blifs.

Even on earth the contemplation of Christ by faith is represented as bringing about a resemblance to Himself. "*We are changed into the same image from glory to glory.*" How much more, when, as divine artists, gazing on His unveiled lustre, we shall be enabled to copy the Divine Original, feature by feature! "We shall be *like* Him, FOR we shall SEE Him." We cannot, even in the present world, be much in the company of an individual without insensibly contracting a resemblance to him,—catching up his tones, his manners, his habits of taste and thought. So will it be in Heaven with Jesus. We shall become more and more "*Saviour-like.*" Oh, surely if it be an exalted honour to *see* Him, with what glory will it invest the ransomed thus, in any feeble measure, to *resemble* Him! If it be the Christian's secret aspiration on earth to be

like Abraham, or Moses, or David, or John, or Paul, what will it be to be "like HIM," of whom these are but the faintest shadow?

But, more than this;—not only is likeness to Jesus an honour; it is a necessary requirement or qualification to render the believer meet for the enjoyment of Heaven. I need, in some degree at least, conformity to Him in character, in order to be able to appreciate His home of purity and love. The most beautiful landscape may be placed before the blind man, but, deprived of the organ of vision, by which alone its beauties can be apprehended, he can see no loveliness in it. So Heaven in its holiness would be one vacant and dreary blank, if I have no moral eye with which to behold it. But that moral vision will be imparted. The perfectly-renewed heart, a copy of its Lord's, will then be the true "organ of sight." There will be no sin to mar the contemplation of the Divine Original;—nothing to disturb or divert the spiritual eye. The heart's affections will repose with full complacency on Him, the great centre of attraction. There will be perfect unison with His will, and

entire, unreserved consecration to His glory ; all the ennobled, renovated, sanctified powers of the glorified nature will be willingly embarked in His service. The feet will run for Him ; the heart will be an altar consecrated to His worship ; memory will be a labyrinth of remembered mercies ; the tongue will be a glorified instrument to resound His praise ; the whole regenerated being a storehouse of collected materials to proclaim and testify of His greatness and majesty—His grace, and truth, and love.

Be this, then, the view of Heaven I seek to have constantly before me,—that I am to be "*like my Lord.*" What a solemn and searching test is thus afforded wherewith to try my anticipations of future bliss ! Amid the most intense worldliness, there may be etherial speculations about the glory of the Saints' Everlasting Dwelling-place. But do I long after its mansions because their bliss consists in having a heart assimilated in holiness to that of Christ ? Like the Elder Brother, and in Him to the whole brotherhood in glory—saints, angels, God !

Oh, if the consciousness of following, as His

ransomed Israel, the pillar of His presence in the wilderness be delightful, what will it be to follow Him in the Promised Land? If the Eschol pledges be grateful, what will it be to pluck for ourselves in the heavenly vineyard, under the shadow of the living Vine Himself?

Lord Jesus! prepare me for meeting Thee, seeing Thee, enjoying Thee. Were I going, in a few years, to reside in a distant land, how I should strive now to master its language—to know its history—to put myself in a state of training for its *habits* and *occupations*. Heaven is that country; and this is the message sent by letter from its shores to every stranger and pilgrim on the earth, “*And every one that hath THIS HOPE in him purifieth himself, even as Christ is pure,*” (1 John iii. 3.) The priests in the earthly temple had to wash and purify themselves ere they could engage in sacerdotal service. So, if I am to be a “priest unto God” in the heavenly Jerusalem, I must sanctify myself for this everlasting feast. It is a quaint but a true saying, “The man who does not find heaven in his soul here, will not find his soul in heaven here-

after." Unlike Jesus now, I cannot expect to be like Him for ever. The fine chisellings of the perfected model, indeed, will be added in glory; but the germ of the likeness—the bold outlines of the moral sculpture—must be begun on earth. Meanwhile, let the words sound in my ears, like the preparation-bell for the great Sabbath-services of the Church in heaven—let them follow me like a celestial monitor wherever I am, and howsoever engaged, "*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,*" (Phil. ii. 5.)



XIII.



Locality and Character.

“The whole creation groans,
And waits to hear that voice,
That shall restore her comeliness,
And make her wastes rejoice.
Come, Lord, and wipe away
The curse, the sin, the stain,
And make this blighted world of ours
Thine own fair world again!”

“Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”—2 PETER iii. 13.



LITTLE has been said in Scripture fitted to gratify an idle curiosity regarding the circumstantialia of future bliss. The extreme and studied reserve, indeed, of the sacred writers on this subject forms one of the striking indirect evidences that they were neither impostors nor enthusiasts—neither pleasers of men, nor compilers of cunningly-devised fables. Had they

been so, they would doubtless have appealed more than they have done to the fancy and passions of their readers, expatiating on the scenery and splendours of the world to come.

While, however, the statements are brief and fragmentary regarding the locality and characteristics of Heaven, it becomes us, with a modest precaution, to be "wise up to what is written."

The verse of the apostle Peter offers us two themes for meditation on a future state of bliss—two Grapes to be gleaned from the Eshcol clusters.

Ist, We are to look for "*new heavens and a new earth.*"

The present globe on which we dwell is to undergo a purifying process by fire. When the day of the Lord comes "as a thief in the night," "*the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up,*" (2 Peter iii. 10.) Although, however, a conflagration be here spoken of, we have strong reason to conjecture that this planet, over which "the morning stars sang together," and

which the Almighty Creator Himself pronounced to be "*very good*," is not to be annihilated—not to be expunged from the "records of creation,"—but rather only remoulded and reconstructed into a "*new earth*," nobler and more beautiful than when the Sons of God shouted over it their lofty anthems. Again, (although we have no positive authority in assigning a special locality for the future home of the glorified,) we can affirm, with strong grounds of certainty, that that home—be it where it may—must consist of a *material* habitation of some kind, suited to *material* bodies. Whatever change may take place hereafter on our physical frames,—however refined and even spiritual in one sense they may be,—we know that a glorified *body* cannot, in the nature of things, be an ethereal, angelic, spiritual essence; floating, in dreamy, shadowy form, through the regions of space. It must assume a substantial, visible, tangible shape. It is to be "*fashioned*" like unto the glorious resurrection-body of Jesus, (Phil. iii. 21.) Much of our present corporeal organism, as we may afterwards more particularly note, *may*, and most

probably *will*, be retained and restored; only their functions vastly augmented, and the sphere of activity vastly enlarged. If, then, for these glorified bodies some local material habitation must necessarily be provided, another step leads to the probable (the natural) inference, that their old abode, purified and renovated, would form the most befitting locality for their eternal residence. We have seen, in a previous Meditation, that the Great Being, at whose feet they are to cast their crowns, is most frequently spoken of and adored by them under His suffering title, "*The Lamb*." If He delights to remember earth as the scene of His *humiliation*—if He delighted to dwell in its "habitable parts" in eras long antecedent to the Incarnation, and ere the millions He was to save were called into existence,—how much more will He delight to traverse it, when—"His blood, His pain, His toils" all past—it becomes the monument and trophy of His unspeakable grace and love! Is it not reasonable to infer that the theatre on which His redemption-work was achieved, so far from being ~~erased~~ erased from the universe, will rather be retained

—in restored and renovated beauty—a lustrous point on which principalities and powers will delight to fix their wondering gaze, and get from its memories fresh matter and motive for praise? Will not the song listened to by Isaiah in the old Jerusalem temple,—when he heard “one cry to another,”—rise to its full cadence, in the ingathered Church of the Redeemed, when, on the platform of “the new earth,” and under the dome of “the new heavens,” the ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands will be heard rolling in the threefold ascription—“*Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts! The whole EARTH is full of His glory?*” (Isa. vi. 3.)

If we are forbidden to hazard stronger assertion, we may, at all events, speak of all this as warrantable conjecture. Earth (our own present sin-stricken, woe-worn earth) may only have to put off these her ashen robes of guilt and woe, to become a heavenly and eternal home for her ransomed children—beautiful amid “a sisterhood of worlds.” Scripture significantly speaks, not of the *renewing* or remodelling of all things, but of “the *restitution* of all things,” (Acts iii. 21.)

It is the building of the old fabric which the earthquake had shattered;—the disentangling of stone by stone from the matting weeds and ivy, and chiselling them afresh for the heavenly Temple. All that sin has left unfulfilled may remain as it is. We may have the same glorious sky for a canopy—the same everlasting mountains to gaze upon—the same grateful vicissitude of seasons,—the same winds to chant—the same waves to chime, “Glory to God in the highest!” The eye may be charmed, as now, with harmonious colouring,—the ear delighted, as now, with music and song. The senses may be as susceptible (or more susceptible) than they now are of the sublime and beautiful in nature;—art may vindicate, under nobler auspices, her claim to be the handmaid of all that is pure and lovely and of good report;—the harpers, harping on a glassy sea, undimmed and unfretted by a ripple of sin or sorrow;—the very words which are now at times attuned to our sinful lips in a sinful world, may be set to the higher music and melodies of a world of purity and love — “*O Lord, how manifold are thy*

works! in wisdom hast thou made them all!
THE EARTH *is full of thy riches!*" (Ps. civ. 24.)

The 2d statement in the words of Peter, is the *special characteristic* of these "new heavens and new earth, *wherein dwelleth righteousness.*"

This brings us again to the great truth, that it is the moral aspect and *character* of heaven, and not its *locality*, which most concerns us. If the Bible descriptions and pictures of a future state teach us anything, it is this—not to indulge in fanciful theories about the accessories of heavenly blifs, but to keep our minds focused on this great truth—that "*holiness becometh that kingdom!*" It matters comparatively little *where* we shall be, but it matters much, and it concerns us much, to know *what* we shall be. We may not be able categorically to pronounce whether Heaven is on some distant, and as yet untraversed nook in creation; or whether it may be this very earth, consecrated by so many mingled memories of sin, suffering, and glory. But this we do know, that *Righteousness* will be the great law of that blifsful empire. We repeat the great truth dwelt

upon in the previous chapter—" *It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be LIKE Him.*" It is sin which forms the foul curse and blot on the "present *evil* world." In itself, our earth is all one could wish as a beauteous and befitting habitation for glorified natures. Take sin away, which has blighted and blasted whatever is fair within it, and you transmute it at once into a "Paradise restored." Yes! imagine this world—this very world—purged of its evils—its selfishness—its profligacy—its covetousness—its jealousies—its backbitings;—each heart a pellucid fountain of pure and holy thought—each household a little Bethel—every life within it an incense-breathing altar;—each nation linked with its fellow in everlasting brotherhood—the curse of Babel removed, and the one universal tongue the language of *love*! Then, following the expulsion of *sin*, picture the expulsion of *suffering*. The cries of infancy—the pains of sickness—the pangs of disease—the hectic flush (the sad premonitory symptom of coming dissolution)—the bitter bereavement—the tolling of the funeral bell—the

crowded grave-yard—the weeds of mourning, and deeper yawning chasms of bitterness in the soul which no human plummet can gauge;—imagine all these unknown—these “former things passed away.” Moreover, add to this *negative*, the *positive* view of a world of bliss,—the presence of God—the personal love of an ever-present Saviour—fellowship with angels—communion with all that is holy and happy! Oh, I need not go and make the sun my chariot, and sweep the azure firmament;—I need not traverse the nightly plains, and make every star a resting-place in my search for a happy heaven;—I have it wherever God and righteousness is! He might erect for me in infinite space some gigantic palace, glittering with coruscations of unearthly splendour—its halls gleaming with the ransacked treasures of the universe—resplendent with beauty, resonant with song. But if sin were there—Heaven it could not be! “*Blessed are the pure in heart, they alone can see*”—they alone can enjoy “*God!*” (Matt. v. 8.)

Is my mind and character now, in any feeble measure, fitted for this sinless abode? No unre-

newed, unregenerate man could be happy there. Take a peasant from the plough, and set him on a throne; how ill at ease would he feel at the strange transition!—how ill qualified to cope with the duties and cares and responsibilities of empire! Take a deaf man to listen to melodious music—or a blind man to gaze on the glories of a landscape, both would fail to imbibe one pleasurable emotion, seeing they are destitute of the requisite inlets of enjoyment. The objects of pleasure are, in both cases, locked to their senses. So in Heaven. Without holiness, I could have no relish for communion with God. I must have a *moral* vision to render me capable of appreciating the moral loveliness of its scenery;—I must have spiritual tastes and likings to render its holy society congenial. As little could an inhabitant of our earth, with his present bodily organisation, be able to sustain life on a planet nearer the sun, (such as *Mercury*,) as the sinner, with his spiritual organisation unchanged, be able to bear the blaze of that heaven of unfulled purity!

O happy time! when alike the world without and the world within will be purified—hallowed—“made meet for the Master’s use.” Every passion quelled—every usurper overthrown—when from this creation, now “groaning and travailing in pain,” shall arise a perpetual hymn of praise and love;—when sin, which like a vast avalanche has been crushing it down, shall have melted away for ever! And more than this, when my own heart—regenerated, glorified—will become a consecrated altar, on which the sacrifices of righteousness will be offered continually;—self, sin, corruption, no longer burning their defiled incense and strange fire, but all shall “*grow*” into an “*holy temple in the Lord*.”

Lord! I would seek to have this Heaven begun! Let me not only *see* the Ephcol clusters;—let me *taste* them. Give me grace to become more and more holy. Let the power of evil wax weaker and weaker, and the power of holiness wax stronger and stronger. It has been beautifully said, “The upper streets of glory are on earth.” Let it be so with me. Let my heart

become now a miniature heaven. Let me know, in my blissful experience, the truth of the Saviour's words, "*The kingdom of God is WITHIN you.*"

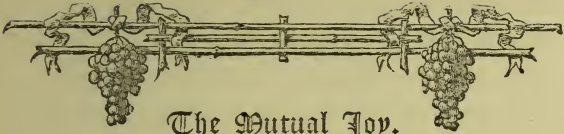
"Many a joyful sight was given,
Many a lovely vision here,
Hill, and vale, and starry even,
Friendship's smile, affection's tear;
These were shadows, sent in love,
Of realities above!

"Here were sweet and varied tones,
Bird, and breeze, and fountain's fall;
Yet Creation's travail-groans
Ever sadly sigh'd through all.
There no discord jars the air,
Harmony is perfect there!

"Here devotion's healing balm
Often came to soothe my breast,
Hours of deep and holy calm,
Earnests of eternal rest.
But the glory was unknown,
Which shall there be all my own!"



XIV.



The Mutual Joy.

“Lo ! He beckons from on high !
Fearless to His presence fly.
Thine the merit of His blood,
Thine the righteousness of God !
Angels, joyful to attend,
Hovering round thy pillow bend ;
Wait to catch the signal given,
And escort thee quick to heaven.”

‘ Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am ; that they may behold my glory.”—JOHN xvii. 24.



AN emigrant is about to sail for a distant land. As the vessel weighs anchor, and his family are gathered on the shore to bid a sorrowful farewell, his last words remind them that it is but a temporary separation,—that in a few brief years, by a favouring Providence, he will be back again, to take them along with him to his adopted home !

Or, a father gathers his children around his death-bed, to give them his last blessing. With his eye looking upwards to the glorious world on which his spirit is about to enter, he tells them, in faltering accents, to dry their tears; for in a little while they will be reunited in that "better land" which knows no parting.

Here is the utterance of a departing Saviour to His orphaned children. It forms a petition in His last intercessory prayer, when about to leave the world, and return to the Father. "Oh, the full joys," says Richard Baxter, speaking of this verse in his "Saint's Rest," "offered to a believer in this one sentence of Christ! Every word full of life and joy!"

The verse brings before us these two thoughts in connexion with a state of future bliss:—

The SAVIOUR'S joy in Heaven in being with His people; and

His PEOPLE'S joy in Heaven in being with their Saviour.

I. The Saviour here speaks of His own joy in having His saints with Him in glory.

The language is that of a conqueror claiming a stipulated reward. God seems to say to Him, "Ask of me, and I will give thee." "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." And what *does* He ask? He had Heaven at His command—"thrones, and dominions, and principalities, and powers." But He prefers the request to be crowned as "Lord of all," in the midst of His saints;—that redeemed sinners, like celestial planets, might through eternity circle and constellate around Him, their central Sun. "He will rest in his love; he will joy over them with singing," (Zeph. iii. 17.)

On earth, a man likes to live and die among those he venerates. The old village patriarch desires to be laid where his fathers sleep, in his native churchyard. The Jew will travel back from the most distant region of the world, that his bones may be laid in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, under the shadow of Olivet, and within hearing of the Kedron. "Where thou diest," said Ruth to the one she loved best, "I shall die, and there shall I be buried," (Ruth i. 17.)

So speaks also an ever-living Saviour of His

people. "Where I live," He says, "there ye are to live also ; eternity shall not separate between you and me." The well-known tomb of a great earthly Architect is placed immediately under the dome of the vast temple his genius had reared. With reverence we say it, Jesus is through eternity to be enshrined in the Temple of His saints,—the living stones rising tier on tier around,—each glowing with the inscription, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me."

What joy thus to behold around Him the travail of His soul, the purchase of His agony! If we value great results generally in proportion to the labour and toil bestowed on them ;—if the philosopher, in arriving at some brilliant achievement in science, has all the greater joy when he thinks of it as the result of months and years of patient and unwearied application ;—if the artist or sculptor has all the greater joy in contemplating his completed work, by retraversing in thought years of incessant labour,—the line by line, and stroke by stroke, until he worked it up to the now breathing marble ;—if the Great God Himself, in resting from the work of creation, when He contemplated its magnitude, had

delight when He pronounced it "very good,"—what must be the transcendent joy with which the adorable Redeemer beholds the completion of an undertaking which involved in it so unparalleled a cost of humiliation and pain and woe! What shall be the complacency with which He, the mighty Architect, contemplates the living, breathing forms of immortal life, which, by His own and His Spirit's work, were chiselled and fashioned to adorn the Heavenly Temple!

Here was "the joy" we read of "that was set before Him;"—the joy of seeing "a multitude which no man can number" who had "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." If the courageous mariner has joy, who, at the risk of his life, bravely dashed into the water, and rescued some struggling cast-away from the weltering waves;—if the Patriot-Philanthropist could with joy stand in thought amid the grateful millions whose fetters he had struck off, and into whose lips he had put the music of freedom;—if the honoured minister has joy, who, on his death-bed, can say, at the retrospect of a lifetime of self-sacrificing devotedness in his Master's cause, "Blessed be God, my

work is done,"*—what shall we say (if we can compare the earthly with the heavenly—the finite with the infinite) of that everlasting joy which shall fill the bosom of the Saviour as He sees those once bound with the fetters of sin, struggling in the waves of despair, now saved with a great salvation, exulting in "the glorious liberty of the sons of God!"

If He had joy—as we believe He had—when in the depths of a bypast eternity He said, "Lo, I come," (though in that coming He had all the appalling prospect of ignominy and shame;)—if "*Wisdom*" had "delights with the sons of men and rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth," when the solitary treading of the wine-press had yet to be borne;—if He had joy when He stretched forth His hands over His "Church in the wilderness," and said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world,"—what intenser and holier joy must *that* be, when, every woe and pang and sorrow at an end, His people shall be with Him "where He is;" earth's battle, with its "confused noise and garments rolled in blood," terminated; the everlasting

* Rev. Edward Bickersteth.

triumphal procession of eternity begun,—immortal palm-branches strewed in the way,—and the streets of the new Jerusalem echoing to the cry, “*Hosannah to the Son of David*,”—“*Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!*” (Rev. xix. 6.)

Behold, then, Heaven as a place where the Saviour himself shall rejoice over His ransomed ones. They are “glorified together.” *They* are glorified in Him, and *He* is glorified in them. “Heaven would not be enough for Jesus without His people. It seems as if their presence were essential, not to His deity, (this cannot be,) but to His mediatorial happiness.”* The joy in that happy world would seem to begin at the centre, and to be deepest there, but sending out its waves to the circumference of glory.

* Harington Evans.



XV.



The Mutual Joy.

"All their toils and conflicts over,
Lo! they dwell with Christ above;
Oh! what glories they discover
In the Saviour whom they love!
Now they see Him face to face,
Him who saved them by His grace."

KELLY.

"Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory."—JOHN xvii. 24.



IN our last, we considered this verse as expressive of the Saviour's joy in Heaven in being with His people. We may consider it now as expressive of *His people's joy in Heaven in being with their Saviour.*

Let us enumerate some of the causes or reasons of this joy.

(I.) *The very fact of HIS being joyful will give them joy.*

When a son hears of some honour done to his hoary-headed parent, or of some event or occurrence that has given him pleasure, the joy or the pride in the parent's bosom will be transfused into that of his child, and become part of his own. Or if we hear of the promotion in the world of a brother or a friend—that by dint of intellect or goodness or worth he has risen to some position of honourable eminence—what a joy his success gives to us! And shall it not be so in an infinite degree with the redeemed in glory? When they behold the Brother of brothers, the Friend of friends, reaping the fruits of the “travail of His soul,” and “being satisfied,” His joy will become their own!

(2.) *The thought of His being near them and with them will impart to them joy.*

It makes us happy to have those near us we love. We never enjoy friendship so much as when that friend is by our side. We may be cheered from time to time by an absent brother's letters, his kind messages, and warm expressions of attachment; but the *written* epistle does not supply the blank of the *living* one—we long to

see him face to face ere our joy can be complete.

So in Heaven with Jesus. "In Thy *presence*," "there is *fulness* of joy." Then and there shall that presence be fully unveiled.

If even in this twilight world the Christian can say, in the enjoyment of a present Saviour, "It is good for me to be *here*;" how good to be *there*! If even *now* the messages of this absent Elder Brother, through His Word and Spirit, be cheering and joyful, what will be the vision and fruition of the Brother Himself! If the manna from the banqueting-table be precious, what will it be to have the vision and fruition of the Master of assemblies!

(3.) The thought of His not only being *with* them and *near* them, *but* EVER *with* them, and EVER *near* them, *will greatly intensify their joy*.

A friend or brother comes from a distant land. His visit is cheering at the time, but it is only a passing glimpse. The joy of his home-coming is soon damped by the necessity or summons again to return. The joy of the disciples in having their Lord with them in the days of His flesh

was sadly clouded by the announcement, "It is expedient for you that I go away." "Because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart," (John xvi. 6.)

Not so will it be with His second and more glorious coming. "The Master is come," will be the joyful message and cry, "and He will never more be taken from us"—He will be no longer "a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night"—no farewell tear will ever again be shed,—no *Olivet* in Heaven, like the earthly one, where He is to be "*parted* from them!" Oh, the joy comprehended in that key-note to the song of the Redeemed, "*And so shall we EVER be with the Lord!*"

(4.) One other element of the joy of the Redeemed in Heaven in having Jesus with them, is that *His presence will through eternity be the pledge and guarantee of their safety.*

The Tree of Life in the first Eden was the guarantee of Adam's safety, so long as he continued faithful to his Maker. Christ is the Tree of Life in the midst of the *Heavenly* paradise—the immortal pledge of His people's covenant security.

"*Because I live ye shall live also,*" (John xiv. 19.) Their happiness through eternity is secured by His meritorious work;—they are there as His blood-bought trophies;—their presence in Heaven is an answer to the prayer we are now considering; it is the glorious Victor claiming His purchased rights, "*Father, I WILL.*" And not till He revokes that "*will,*"—in other words, not till an unchanging Saviour become *changeable*,—can His people's happiness be altered or impaired.

Reader! learn from all this the same practical lesson we have previously enforced,—how little it matters where the *locality* of Heaven is. It is "*with Christ.*" That is enough. "*With ME! where I AM!*" and the Christian needs no more. The last words of invitation of Jesus to His Church, when that Church is taking its transition step from the *militant* to the *triumphant* state, will be, "*Come, ye blessed of my Father!*" Observe, it is not, "*Go, ye blessed, to some paradise of my providing: I am about to return to my heavenly throne: I have marked out some new Eden for you;—some blissful soli-*

tude where you can reign alone ;—but though separated from me, I have made provision for the fullest measure of joy.” No ; this would hush every harp, and cloud every spirit. It would be like sending them to a universe without a sun. It would be to tell them they were to be dependent on the fitful lustre of glimmering stars. But it is, “COME, ye blessed ! Come with ME ! I ascend to *my* Father and *your* Father—to my God and your God. We go together. I will be your forerunner. I will shew you the path of life. My glory is to be *your* glory. My gladness is to be *your* gladness. ‘Enter ye into the joy of *your* Lord.’”

In some exalted sense, may we not put the words of the apostle into the mouth of his Lord and Master, and suppose Him thus to address His saints on the Great Day—“What is my joy or crown of rejoicing ? Are not ye in My own presence ?”

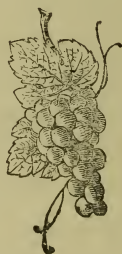
The prayer of Jesus we have been considering is ascending *now*. It has been ascending and fulfilling for six thousand years. Though unseen to mortal eye, He, the great covenant Angel, is

even now standing before the throne, with the breastplate of His unchanging priesthood. The hand that was once transfixed to the tree, is pointing to the names engraven there, and saying, "Father, I will" that those here imperishably inscribed "be with me where I am."

With what solemn significance may we connect the utterance of that prayer with every believer's death. The Church on earth may be weeping and mourning over some bright light on the eve of being extinguished, wondering, perhaps, at the mysterious providence which is about to carry bereavement into a stricken household. Could they listen to the transactions in the upper sanctuary, every repining word would be hushed into silence. They would find the death-bed on earth was the answer to the request in Heaven—"Father, *I will*;"—angels hovering over it with the joyful summons, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee!"

Christian! exult in this "blessed hope." Covet the possession of this fulness of joy;—beholding Jesus as He is, rejoicing over you with all the joy of His infinite Godhead and His glorified

humanity. Here we are merely among the shallows of this ocean of infinite love; what will it be when we shall be "able to comprehend with all saints, what is the height and depth, and length and breadth, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge!" (Eph. iii. 18, 19.)



XVI.



Diverse Magnitudes.

“There, are those everlasting gardens
Where angels walk and seraphs are the wardens,
Where every flower, brought safe through death’s dark
portal,
Becomes immortal.
Each blooming bright,
Though some reflecting more of Heaven’s all-glorious
light.”

“One star differeth from another star in glory.”—
I COR. xv. 41.



IN that world of light, and love, and
glory, all will be supremely blessed.
But it is a thoroughly scriptural view
of the happiness of the Redeemed in glory, to
represent it, though the same in *kind*, as differing
in degree. The saints will be classified—“enrolled
in moral genealogies.”

Diversity is a law of God’s universe. It extends
to great things as well as to little things. Some

flowers are more beautiful than others. Some intellects are more lofty than others. One planet in the firmament is of greater magnitude than another. There are gradations too in the heavenly hierarchy. Angels and archangels,—principalities and powers,—“the greatest and the least” in the kingdom of heaven.

And have we not reason also to believe that it will be so with glorified saints? All, indeed, will have reached their thrones and their crowns through “the *one* only way.” We cannot speak of any of that white-robed multitude as being more justified than others; for they equally point, as the ground of their justification, to the finished work and righteousness of their adorable Surety. They all equally feel that in being saved they were “saved by *grace*,”—that nothing but the blood of that precious Lamb of God was between them and everlasting ruin! And just as one law binds the planets and the atoms which compose them; so the one great principle of love to Him who died for them, will bind together the vast family of the ransomed, from the soaring Paul to the weeping Magdalene. But the degree

of the saints' happiness will be regulated according to their advances in holiness. Our blessed Lord Himself very emphatically enunciates this same truth, more especially in His parable of the Talents, where the amount of the reward is in exact proportion to diligence and fidelity in trading;—a parable the lesson of which the great Apostle has thus translated into one of his weighty aphorisms: "*Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap,*" (Gal. vi. 7.) Works will form no plea or ground whatever for acceptance before the throne. But while it is not said of the "blessed dead" that their works "*go before them,*" (as a passport to their crowns;) it is said "*their works do follow them,*" (Rev. xiv. 13.) There will be a vast difference between the happiness of the man who had done much for Christ on earth,—who had long stood "a pillar in the temple of God,"—and that of the monument of grace who had just been plucked at the eleventh hour "a brand from the burning." As memory, we have reason to know, will form a fearful element in the misery of the lost (Luke xvi. 25;) so, we may conclude,

will the exercise of the same ennobled faculty form an element of exalted bliss in the case of the righteous and the saved. The recollection of all that we have done out of love to the Saviour, and to promote His cause on earth;—the sacrifices, little though they be, we have made for Him,—the denial of self for the furtherance of His glory,—the affection we have borne to His people,—the pleasures we have forsworn and forgone for His sake,—all such will be matter of hallowed joy. Jesus will love to recount them;—His words will carry their approving echo through all eternity,—“*Inasmuch as ye did it to the least of these, ye did it unto me.*” “*Ye have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things,*” (Matt. xxv. 23, 40.)

But yet, with all this diversity in bliss and glory, there will be no strife among the heavenly, as once among the earthly disciples, as to “which should be the greatest.” In this world, the race for distinction is limited and restricted; only a favoured few can attain pre-eminence. “They which run” (on earth) “a race, run *all*, but *one* receiveth the prize,” (1 Cor. ix.

24.) In Heaven, each will receive his reward. The runner may be distanced in the earthly course by his competitor—not so in the heavenly. “In the race for most worldly objects, one who has *prepared* himself, however well, runs uncertainly, since, after all his exertions, another may outstrip him; whereas he who aids a brother in striving for the incorruptible crown, is ever benefiting himself.”* There will be crowns with varying lustre, and harps of varying tone; but, like the blending of different colours to the eye, or different notes to the ear, all will be pervaded by one beautiful harmony. The saint on the loftiest pinnacle of glory, and the saint on the outskirts of the spiritual horizon, will have the same confession—“We are all one in Christ Jesus.”

There will, moreover, be a felt and acknowledged *equity* in this future retribution. The grace or virtue most assiduously cultivated by the believer on earth, will, (in subordination to God's glory,) be the main channel of his happiness in heaven. In the words of Richard Baxter, “we

* Whately.

shall join with Moses in his song—with David in his psalm of praise. We shall see Enoch walking with God—Noah enjoying the end of his singularity—Joseph of his integrity—Job of his patience—Hezekiah of his uprightness, and all the saints the end of their faith.”

On earth, the cultivation of particular branches of knowledge brings a pleasure to their possessors which is denied to those ignorant of them. The man, for example, who has cultivated the science of *music*, is capable of enjoying the elaborate composition and exquisite harmonies of some great master, in a way which another cannot do who has neglected this study. So in Heaven; we believe that whatever may have been the tree of righteousness—the Christian grace or virtue or labour—you have most assiduously nurtured and cultivated here, you will through eternity encamp under its shadow and partake of its fruits. Whatever were the charities to which your lips and your heart were most frequently attuned below, you will resume with most intense pleasure amid the sublime harmonies of “the new heavens and the new

earth." Whatever kindled your lustre as an earthly star, that radiance will be perpetuated in the celestial firmament. Heaven will not extinguish your earthly tastes and longings—your earthly energies and activities. As a luminous orb you will still shine for God—not absorbing your light, but delighting to be a holy medium in giving forth radiations to others. Not a volume bound up and put under lock and key in the library of Heaven, but continued as a living epistle to be read by other orders of intelligent beings. Not a life of dreamy inaction—all its moral activities arrested on entering the spirit-world, but occupied in true angel-work—endless ministries of love.

Jesus, knowing the tastes and capacities of His ransomed, will delight to lead from fountain to fountain—from scene to scene—from eminence to eminence, as He knows they will be severally able to appreciate them.

Oh, what an incentive is this to be "up and doing,"—to be adding to your faith the bright catalogue of Christian graces! Seek an "*abundant entrance*." It will be joy indeed, hap-

pine's far transcending earth's happiest hours, to bask as a star on the outskirts of glory. But why not be fired by the noble ambition to be near the all-glorious Centre? Your crown, given by grace and sprinkled with blood, can never be dim,—but why not strive now, that when “the Lord the righteous Judge” shall “give it you,” you may be “found unto *praise*, and *honour*, and *glory*,” at His second appearing?



XVII.



Glorified Bodies.

“Grave, the guardian of our dust,
Grave, the treasury of the skies;
Every atom of thy dust,
Rests in hope again to rise.

“Hark, the judgment-trumpet calls,
Soul, rebuild thy house of clay,
Immortality its walls,
And eternity its day.”

“Fashioned like unto His glorious body.”—
PHIL. iii. 21.



IS this frail body to share none of the glories of immortality? Is the decaying tenement to slumber on,—a heap of unconscious dust,—to be at last swept into annihilation at the dissolution of all things?

“*The voice said, Cry! and he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is GRASS!*” (the noble! the beautiful! the ornamental!) all like withering,

fading *grafs* of the field! (Isa. xl. 6.) Such is the Bible's humiliating description of the body *here*, and it is echoed back in mournful experience from ten thousand tombstones, and ten thousand aching hearts.

But "*this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality*," (1 Cor. xv. 53.) The resurrection-body, freed from the last vestige of corruption—purged from the last taint of earthliness—ennobled, purified, etherealised—shall stand "without fault before the throne," the crowning and culminating triumph of the redemption work, (Rom. viii. 23.)

We need not dwell on nature's familiar analogies. The germ expanding into the perfect blossom;—the little grain of corn, buried in its tiny grave of inert clod, bursting forth in the appointed spring-time;—the torpid caterpillar cradled in a dark cell—a loathsome dungeon—yet that dungeon becoming the birthplace of a beauteous insect, mounting to heaven on wings of purple and gold. These are the mute utterances of the outer world on the *possibility* of a truth beyond the province of reason.

But Scripture comes in where reason is dumb or ambiguous. It tells me of the reconstruction of the dissolved earthly tabernacle into "*a building of God eternal in the heavens.*" It tells more;—that the spiritual body is to be "fashioned" like to that of a glorified Redeemer. It tells that there is at this moment a MAN wearing a glorified Human body on the throne. "Christ, the first-fruits"—the first Sheaf of the immortal harvest—has been waved in the new Jerusalem temple, the pledge and earnest of the myriad sheaves that are to follow; and His saints (raised up in their bodies) will be "*caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so be ever with the Lord,*" (1 Thess. iv. 17.)

It is vain to attempt conjectures as to the nature of the incorruptible and glorified frame,—what changes will take place on the present condition of our bodily system. That there will be new powers and susceptibilities of enjoyment added to what we now possess, we have the strongest reason to believe. There will be no greater change, indeed, in a glorified state on our physical structure than is absolutely neces-

sary. We know, however, the dependence of the mind on the body; and it is quite possible to conceive, by a finer bodily organisation, a corresponding enlargement of the mental faculties and powers. We may be deprived of some important sources of happiness at present, owing to the want in our existing bodily frames of some necessary inlets for these. A man deprived of eyesight has a *mind* as susceptible as others of taking impressions of beauty; but having no organ to be the medium of their conveyance, he forfeits the pleasures which his fellows enjoy. So, may it not be possible in heaven, by means of a more perfect bodily structure—a physical frame even more “fearfully and wonderfully made” than our present one—to have the way opened for new inlets of exalted enjoyment—waking into energy dormant powers of which we are now as unconscious as the deaf man is of the sweets of music, or the blind man of the glories of the sun, or the tiny infant of the philosopher’s speculations?*

We may infer, moreover, that whatever be the

* Whately.

nature of the change, and however vast, it will not be *so* vast as to destroy personal identity. We might recur to earthly analogies here also. The grown-up man has an entirely different body in its component parts from what he had as an infant. The particles which make up his material framework have again and again been renewed, yet in *person* he remains the *same*. Heaven will be the manhood of our earthly being. But though the transformation must necessarily be great from our present "infant state," personal identity will remain undestroyed. "*Then shall I know, even as also (now) I am (here) known,*" (1 Cor. xiii.) The features of my buried friend I shall recognise again. The beaming face of cherished affection shall wear the old impress of earth:—no change but this, that the shifting tent is transmuted into "a building of God," reared of permanent and imperishable materials—a bodily structure that shall know no decrepitude—smiles that shall never die—new powers conferred which earth may have longed for, but never possessed—all emulous for the divine glory, and instinct with burning and

untiring zeal in His service! And more than all, it will be Humanity in its noblest type—*“fashioned like to Christ’s glorious body.”* There will be a family resemblance to the elder Brother, bodily, spiritually. It is said that He shall come to be “glorified” not only BY his saints, but *“in his saints,”* as they bear His image, and wear His likeness. *“We know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”* Some of our loveliest garden flowers are grafts from wild plants in brake and forest—thicket and hedgerow. So beauteous are these transplants as almost to belie their pedigree. Their perfect tints, and symmetrical forms, and sweet perfume, however, prove the culture and development of which the plant or flower in its native state was capable. So shall it be in a far higher and nobler sense with flowers transplanted into the garden above. The glorified body! how immeasurably will it transcend in physical and moral beauty the old earthly tabernacle! “Sown in corruption, raised in incorruption; sown in weakness, raised in power; sown a natural body, raised a spiritual

body." The first was "of the earth, earthy," the second is fashioned like unto the glorious body of "the Lord from heaven!" (1 Cor. xv. 42.)

Glorious body, indeed! without sin, without pain, without weakness, or weariness, or infirmity. The thought of dissolution, which now casts its cold shadow across our path, no longer known or dreaded! Paul's earthly soliloquy changed to this, "O *happy* man that I am, now that I am *delivered* from this body of death!" The Christian's grave, however lowly, is thus "hallowed ground." There slumbers, in these clods of the valley, *redeemed dust*. The mausoleum of clay becomes the casket of a gem which is to sparkle through eternal ages in the Redeemer's crown.



XVIII.



“Jerusalem, my happy home,
Name ever dear to me,
When shall my labours have an end
In joy and peace in Thee!

“When shall these eyes thy heaven-built walls,
And pearly gates behold?
Thy bulwarks with salvation strong,
And streets of shining gold.

“Oh, when, thou city of my God,
Shall I thy courts ascend,
Where congregations ne’er break up,
And sabbaths have no end.”

“And I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty
and the Lamb are the temple of it.”—REV. xxi. 22.



HEAVEN WITHOUT A TEMPLE! How
strange, at first sight, is this figurative
description! The temple was “the
excellency of beauty” in the earthly Jerusalem.
It was the place of solemnities, the sanctuary of

prayer, the frequented haunt of angels; nay, the visible pavilion where God himself in mystic splendour dwelt. To the exile of Patmos it had more than an Israelite's wonted hallowed associations. Through its "Beautiful Gate" he had oft and again passed, in company with his Divine Master. In its sacred porticos he had listened to the voice of Him who spake as never man spake. But as the celestial vision now passes before him, he looks in vain, amid the shining portals, and jasper walls, and golden-paved streets, for a similar sacred shrine. He is struck with the mysterious absence. "*I saw no temple therein!*"

This apparent omission in the inspired picture tells us that *there will be no more need of Temples in Heaven.*

There was no temple required in the first Eden! *There* our first parents, in the days of their innocence, worshipped God under the blue vault of nature's temple!

The angels in heaven, so far as we know, have no visible sanctuary, there is nothing in their sinless world to interrupt their interchanges of

love and fellowship, or to mar the cadence of their song. *Sin* first demanded some special localities for religious worship—consecrated spots partitioned off from the world. There was no need of sheepfolds, so long as no wolf prowled abroad. But when sin and Satan gained entrance, the little flock required the sheltering covert, wherein they might rest in safety amid “*the mountains of prey*,” (Ps. lxxvi. 4.)

As it was of old in the earthly paradise, so will it be amid the glories of “Eden restored”—there will be no “present evil world” to disturb its worshippers, and render needful the quiet and seclusion of hallowed edifices, to secure the sanctities of devotion. Every place in the vast domain of Heaven will be a *Temple*,—every spot hallowed ground.

Divisions, too, there will be none. Here, alas! the existence of many and separate Temples, is too often the painful indication of divided churches and severed believers; worshipping apart,—refusing to hold fellowship in one and the same shrine, and drawing lines of unseemly demarcation between each other. In *Heaven*, all

shall see "eye to eye." No walls of separation *there*. No rival Gerizims and Zions *there*. The worshippers being assimilated to God, shall be assimilated to one another. They shall have *one* temple, *one* motive, *one* heart, *one* song. "See how these glorified Christians love one another!"

But if the apostle, in gazing on the apocalyptic vision, "saw no temple," what was the substitute? The want of the earthly symbol of glory and beauty, must surely be supplied by something nobler and sublimer! Yes, there IS to be a Temple in Glory, but it is a house "not made with hands." Materialism, with all its magnificent dimensions, melts away;—" *The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple thereof.*"

There is one sense, indeed, in which, at this moment, God and the Lamb are the Temple of the universe. God's presence is all-pervading. The splendours of the visible firmament, are but the hangings and drapery of a more august and awful shrine. But I cannot now, with my feeble faculties, discern the majesty of His glory. I feel that in this "childhood-world" I am like

the infant in the assembly of philosophers, who is all unconscious of the superiority of the minds around him, and can hold no fellowship with them in their lofty themes of converse. Though surrounded on all hands with the footprints and manifestations of a present Divinity, my befitting exclamation is, "*Canst thou by searching find out God?*" (Job xi. 7.)

In *Heaven* there is to be a vast revelation of a "hidden God." In the Temple on earth, He was screened by an interposing veil;—that veil in glory is to be withdrawn. Nay, I am to be *enshrined* in Deity! Heaven is not to be so much the temple of God, as *God* the temple of Heaven. His attributes are to be the walls and bulwarks of my everlasting security.

But this verse of our present Meditation tells us more than this. Jesus "*the Lamb*" is to form the "Gate Beautiful" of this Temple—the Revealer of Him who dwells "*in the light which no man can approach unto!*" (1 Tim. vi. 16.)

We believe it will be as true of the *glorified* saint, as of the *ransomed* on earth, "*No man*

hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten SON which is in the bosom of the Father he hath declared him," (John i. 18.) He will be the true Angel "standing in the sun," the all-glorious medium through which we can see God and live!

"The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple thereof!" This tells me that all my knowledge will come *direct* from God in Christ. Now, there is needed the intervention of the Word, Ordinances, Sacraments. Then, the spiritual world will no more be lighted up by satellites; the "fairness of the moon" will give way to the "brightness of the Sun;"—the starlight will be quenched and superseded by the Great Spiritual Luminary. "You have but now and then seen your Beloved looking through the lattice of ordinances,—what a burst of joy awaits you when you shall see Him face to face, and evermore be with Him!" *

Yes, indeed, ineffable bliss! fulness of joy! No more yearning desires after "something better;"—the infinite all-satisfying "good" attained;—as happy as everlasting goodness and

* Miss Plumptre.

wisdom and omnipotence can make me. My feeble voice swelling the joyous anthem within temple-walls whose only confines are light and love.

Is my title clear to this glorious Heaven? Am I fitted now to be the inhabitant of such a Temple?—to dwell *with* God, (yea, *in* God,) occupying these inner chambers of Deity? Heaven is a City. It is an amazing privilege the thought of reigning there as King. But not less elevating, surely, the thought of Heaven as a Temple, where I shall be occupied as a ministering priest,—“a priest unto *God*,”—ready to cast my censer as well as my crown at His feet, and “offer the sacrifice of praise continually!”

Be it mine to prepare for the sacerdotal work. “*Holiness to the Lord*,” was written on the high priest’s frontlet of old. Let it be my superscription now. Let the eye of faith delight to dwell especially on the *great* High Priest—He who, as the Covenant Angel, is interceding for me; and who, through eternity, will form the blood-besprinkled entrance,—the ever-open gate conduct-

ing into the Holy Place. There may, and doubtless will be many other lofty anthems that shall resound in that temple; but "*Worthy is the Lamb that was slain,*" will ever be the sublimest chant of the Church of the first-born. We shall exult in its other glories. But it will be the inscription over the portal that will be the theme of eternity—"Boldness to enter into the holiest by the *blood of Jesus.*"

"Far beyond the grave's dark night,
What bright TEMPLE meets my sight?
Softly stealing on the ear,
What strange music do I hear?
'Tis the golden harps on high,
'Tis the chorus of the sky!

"Give my soul the spotless dress
Of Thy perfect righteousness;
Then, at length, a welcome guest,
I shall enter to the feast,
Take the harp and raise the song,
All Thy ransom'd ones among."



XIX.



The Glorious Transition.

“There still my thoughts are dwelling,
’Tis there I long to be ;
Come, Lord, and call Thy servant
To blessedness with Thee !
Come, bid my toils be ended—
Let all my wanderings cease ;
Call from the wayside lodging
To the sweet home of peace.”

GERHARDT.

“Absent from the body, and to be present with the
Lord.”—2 COR. v. 8.



A GAIN the curtain of glory is lifted, and what do we see? The emancipated spirit bursting its chrysalis shell—soaring upwards on immortal wings to be “with the Lord,” and that “for ever!” We are interested in the first look we get of “*a great man*” on earth. What must the first glance be in heaven of JESUS!—that mystic name which has here

put music into the heart in many a dark hour, and lighted up its wilderness with a halo of joy! If Jacob longed intently to see Joseph, what will be the saint's ardent desire to gaze on the true Joseph—Him whom his "soul loveth!" Yes, on entering heaven, it will not be the burning ranks of angel and archangel, cherubim and seraphim, that will fix his arrested gaze. His exclamation will be, as his eye wanders upwards to the central Throne, and settles on a Countenance there beaming with unutterable loveliness,—"*Is that* indeed the Saviour, whom, though so long unseen, I have nevertheless loved!"

And what shall he see? It will be the same Lord to whose sublime utterances of love he has so often listened in thought, as eighteen hundred years ago He "spake as never man spake." The same Being who wept, and groaned, and sympathised, and suffered. He will think of Him at Sychar's well—on Tabor—on Tiberias—on Olivet—by the Kedron—at Bethany—at Calvary. It is "*that same Jesus*"—He who once lay, in a borrowed cradle, a helpless babe at

Bethlehem; He who spake comfortable words to the bereaved, and gave back to widowed and yearning hearts their perished joys; He who invited the weary to rest, and never scorned the penitent's tears, or left unsuccoured the call of mercy; He who lay convulsed in anguish on the cold ground of Gethsemane; He who bowed His head on the bitter tree; He who met the weeping Mary with words of joy as she stood disconsolate by His grave, and accosted Peter with the gentlest and most tender of rebukes. I shall see (if I be one of His ransomed people) "*that same Jesus*"—I shall enjoy with Him near and confidential intercourse, and nothing shall ever separate me from His love!

Of old, some of the transient earthly glimpses of this Saviour were blessed and consoling. If it were gladdening when Jacob saw Him in His angel-form at Peniel—or aged Simeon clasped Him in his withered arms in the temple—or the disciples beheld Him on Tabor—or Martha and Mary wept with Him at Bethany—or when the beloved apostle leant on His bosom, met Him on the way to Emmaus, or on the lonely shores

of Patmos ; what will it be to have these seasons of intercourse renewed without their transience ; —to bask through eternal years under the radiance of His smile,—His own words obtaining an everlasting fulfilment—“ *Where I AM, there shall also my servant be !*” Here, too, we are again reminded that means and agencies will be required no longer in His communications with us. The streams will come welling fresh from the living fountain ;—the rays will be untainted and undimmed by transmission through any impurer medium ;—there will be *personal* communings between every saint and his living Head,—“ *They shall see His face.*” Whatever may be the believer’s relation to the infinite circumference of heaven—to the thrones, and dominions, and principalities, and powers—he will be ever near to the all-glorious Centre ! “He,” it has been well said, “who is now in every saint the *hope* of glory, will then be in every saint the possession, realisation, and fulness of glory.”*

And, observe from our motto verse, it is an *immediate* transition. The spirit, “with a bound,”

* Cheever’s “Windings.”

at the hour of death, as it forfakes its earthly tabernacle, enters the Divine prefence and the heavenly Home. Be affured, Paul would never have uttered the wifh for departure, in order to lapfe into a mefmeric trance or lethargic flumber. Never would he have ufed fuch language as this,—“ *We are confident*” (we are *bold*, as the word means, in the profpect of death) “ *and willing rather to be abfent from the body,*” if he had any lefs elevating defire and profpect than to be “ *prefent with the Lord.*” Far rather would he have remained on earth, enjoying the bleffed experiences of the Saviour’s felt prefence and love, and the confcioufnefs of promoting His caufe, than to have paffed into a ftate of dreamy, drowsy infenfibility and torpor. The exchange, in fuch circumftances, would have been a pofitive diminution of bleffednefs. It would have been the withdrawal from active work and warfare in the Church below,—an inglorious tranfition for his hero-fpirit. Dungeon, chains, watching, fafting, ftripes and fufferings *with* Chrift on earth, would have been, to a foul like his, infinitely preferable to fuch a ftate of flum-

brous oblivion and unconsciousness. But he specially guards us against any such supposition: "*Not,*" says he, "*for that we would be unclothed*"—not that I long merely to quit the trammels of the flesh, in order to escape from the encumbering clay—"but to be clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life," (2 Cor. v. 4.)

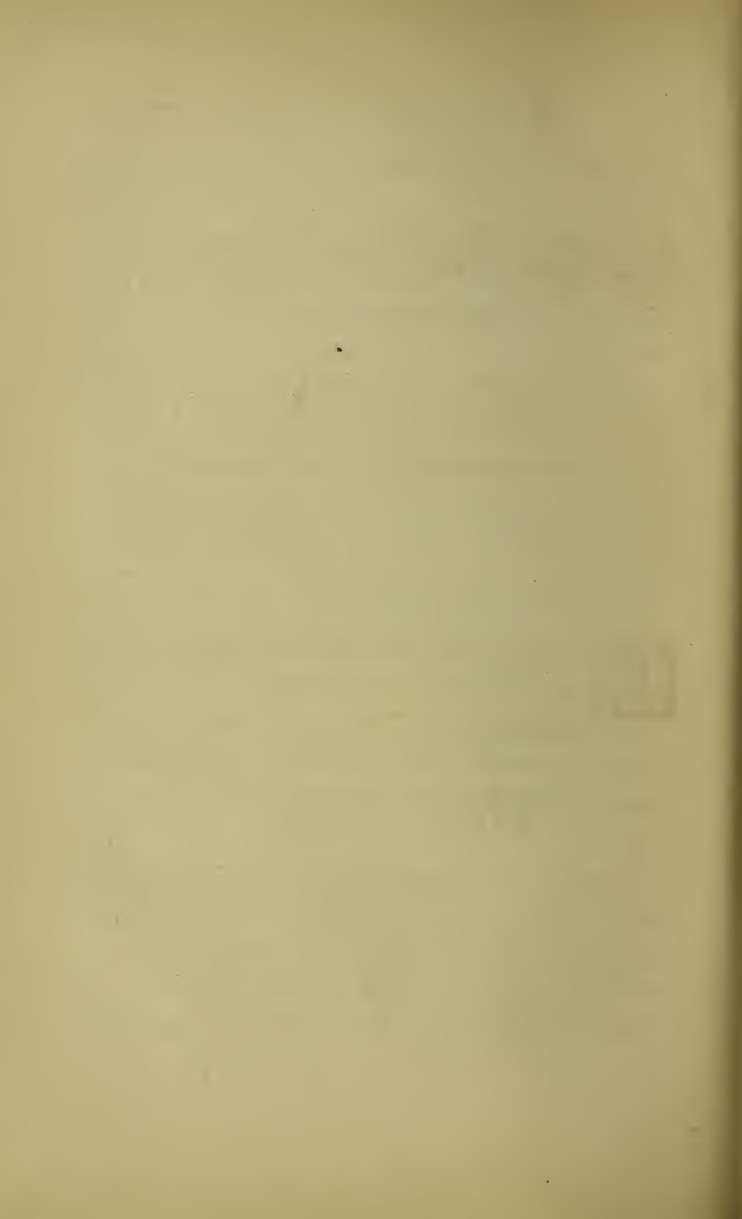
Am I prepared for this presence? am I living under the power of this "*blest hope?*" Were I to be ushered into the presence of an *earthly* sovereign, how careful should I be in my preparation for so august a privilege! What shall it be in the prospect of appearing before Him in comparison with whom the loftiest monarch of earth is but as a passing shadow—an atom of dust—the mote of a sunbeam! "*Present with the Lord!*" What an honour! The brightest of those bright and holy beings who bow before His throne with adoring reverence, know no higher! "It is not here," says the author of the "Saint's Rest," "that He hath prepared the presence-chamber of His glory; He hath drawn the curtain between us and Him; we are

far from Him as creatures, and farther as frail mortals, and farthest as sinners." Death is the robing-room, where the ragged pilgrim-garment is thrown off, and where, as glorified guests, we shall receive our wedding attire. But the barrier shall in due time be taken down, and we shall be ushered amid the uncurtained splendours of the "*new* heavens and the new earth." Then shall His own voice be heard announcing the believer's consummated bliss, and its mightiest element—"Enter thou into the joy of **THY LORD.**"

"The pains of death are past,
Labour and sorrow cease;
And life's long warfare closed at last,
His soul is found in peace.

"Soldier of Christ, well done!
Praise be thy new employ;
And while eternal ages run,
Rest in thy Saviour's joy."





XX.



"Every voice is then harmonious,
Praising God in hymns symphonious,
Love each heart with light enfoldng,
As they stand in peace beholding
There the Triune-Deity!"

THOMAS A KEMPIS.

"God all in all."—I COR. xv. 28.

WE may shift and alter the heavenly kaleidoscope, but God is still the centre of its ineffable blifs—"the glory of its glory." In union and communion with *Him* alone, will the longings of the immortal spirit be at length fully and for ever satisfied.

Existence is one long-drawn sigh after some infinite good. The disciples of Plato, in their gropings in the dark, aspired after a mystic, undefined *Pleroma* or "Fulness," the possession of which was associated with perfect happiness.

This mythical dream of pagan philosophy has its reality in "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." Here we have at best only some feeble foretastes of the "fulness of God"—some sips at the earthly fountain ;—what shall it be when we come to stand on the margin of the infinite ocean ! Ask the angels who are now peopling that world of bliss—or the myriads of ransomed saints whose probation is finished and their glorification begun, in what their supreme happiness consists. Their response would be in words they had often before used, but whose true meaning they had only learned in Glory—" *It is good for us to draw near unto GOD,*" (Ps. lxxiii. 28.)

The best earthly types of Heaven in Scripture were designedly imperfect. How often, for example, was the earthly Zion spoken of as the pattern and image of the Heavenly. But even in this "perfection of beauty" there were defects and blemishes. No river (save the tiniest of brooks) flowed past its walls. No war-galley (as in other earthly capitals) was ever seen sailing by, or ship of commerce unloading its stores. "But," says God, in beautiful allusion to these

wants in the earthly Zion, "I shall come in place of them in the Jerufalem above." "*The glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams, wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby,*" (Isa. xxxiii. 21.) All other joys will be but reflections of the Great joy. We shall be independent of starlight blessings when we have the central sun—of the rivulet when we have the ocean. Were the alternative presented, rather would the ranks of the glorified have God without Heaven, than Heaven without God. There will be a devout consciofnefs throughout all their wide circle of a sweet and holy dependence on Him. They will never forget the pilgrim prayer of earth—"Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe," (Ps. cxix. 117.) They will feel, even with the crown on their head and the victor-song on their lips, that it is He alone who maketh them to dwell in safety, (Ps. iv. 8.) They will live upon no graces. Pensioners on earth, they will exult in the feeling that they are pensioners still. The confession of time will be the anthem

of eternity—"By the grace of God we are what we are," (Rom. xv. 10.)

We read of the saints that, glorified though they be, they still "*fall down before the throne,*" (Rev. iv. 10.) Their ascription, crowned though they be, is this, "*Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne,*" (Rev. vii. 10.) The stream may sooner do without its fountain—the parched furrow without its refreshing shower—the firmament without its sun—than they without Him who is the source and fountain-head of all life, and light, and joy. "*God himself shall be with them and be their God, and they shall see His face,*" (Rev. xxi. 3.) The infinite centre of an infinite circumference, they shall love all in *Him*, and *Him* in all! Not more surely on earth do the rivers run to the ocean, than in Heaven will every aspiration of the Church triumphant be turned Godward; and it will be our happiness thus supremely to love,—supremely to adore Him. Here, how often, how constantly, has the Christian to watch over the objects of his love, lest ever and anon he be betrayed into some sin-

ful excess of idolatrous attachment. There will be no such bound set in Heaven, because no such need for it. What a glory it imparts to the soul of man,—what an ennobling consciousness it gives of our true dignity,—*future communion with, yea, future assimilation to, the great Jehovah!*—gravitating towards *Him* as an all-glorious centre;—the aim and object of an infinite existence, perfectly to please Him!

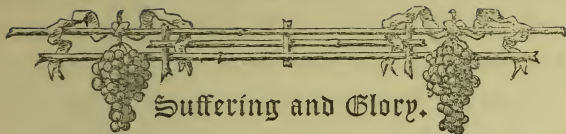
Let me prepare for this lofty destiny, by making God more than ever “the portion of mine inheritance;” having a more constant and habitual aim that His will and glory be the regulators of my daily being. This was my Saviour’s desire for Himself. It constituted the happiness of His spotless life,—doing His Father’s will and not His own. “I do think,” says Lady Powerscourt, “one chief part of our happiness hereafter will consist in our having done with wretched self,—God being all in all.” Oh! what a solemnising influence would it exert on all our thoughts and feelings, our duties and engagements, our pursuits and pleasures, our sleeping and waking, our airy

visions and worldly plans, were we to think that soon—very soon—we shall be *with God*, and that for ever and ever!

“Blessed fold ! no foe can enter,
And no friend departeth thence :
God Himself their Sun, their Centre,
And their Shield Omnipotence.

“Thought, reprefs thy weak endeavour,
Here must Reason prostrate fall ;
Oh th’ ineffable *for ever*,
And th’ *eternal* ALL IN ALL !”





“The storm’s black wing
is never spread athwart celestial skies ;
Its wailings blend not with the voice of spring,
As some too tender flowret fades and dies.

“With Hope our guide,
White-robed and innocent, to tread the way,
Why fear to plunge in Jordan’s rolling tide,
And find the haven of eternal day ?”

“For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”—ROM. viii. 18.

THUS does a master-hand strike the balance between present sufferings and future glory. “*I reckon*” (I make the calculation, and the deliberate result is), that the trials of earth are not to be named in contrast or comparison with the peerless joys of Heaven.

The great Apostle was one specially fitted to make such a calculation. He was abundantly

versant himself in the school of suffering, and well able therefore to cast up the balance-sheet. Few pilgrims that ever trod the lower valley, were more honoured than he; but few had greater weights to carry. He felt, however, that all these earthly weights added together and combined, were far outweighed by *one* other, and that was the "*weight of glory*."

His language here is remarkable. He institutes a comparison between present suffering and future bliss—two things which we may think cannot well be compared. May not the following have been a few points of antithesis which suggested themselves, as His mind made the sanctified reckoning?

All present sufferings have intervals of release. There are lulls in the storm. The fevered patient may have his snatches of repose, fitful and unrefreshing though they be. But in the glory that is to follow, there are *no* intervals, no lulls, no ebbings in the ever-advancing tide of happiness and joy.

In the sufferings of this life there are many alleviations. The bitterest cup is mingled with *some*

sweet drops—the most aching soul is seldom without *some* supporting solaces. But the glory which follows knows no modifications. The golden vessels there are indeed always filling—always increasing, but they are always full. The “just made perfect,” though ever aspiring after fresh draughts of the living fountain, will never be heard uttering the voice of complaint—“Oh, that it were with me as in months past!” The glory is a progressive glory—the joy a progressive joy;—their change is a change for the better, never for the worse.

The sufferings of the present, in the case of the believer, much as they may cloud and darken his earthly and outward happiness, *cannot affect the unassailable bliss of his inner life*. But the heavenly glory will interpenetrate alike his outer and his inner being. He will be steeped in bliss. He will have around and on every side of him a glory which imagination has never ventured to conceive,—while his glorified spirit will reflect, without speck or stain, the image of an all-glorious God! *

* See Rev. Robert Hall on this verse.

"*The sufferings of the present!*" Go up to that bright and glorious multitude harping with their harps, and crowding the shores of the glassy sea. Hear their one, united testimony. It is, that *but* for their trials they would never have been *there*. Every page in their history bears the signet-mark of "much tribulation." It is endorsed with the words, "*So He brought them to their desired haven!*" "*So!*" It was by a way not of their own choosing. "*So!*" It was through winds, and waves, and buffeting elements;—the ship tacking about;—"neither sun nor stars for many days appeared, and no small tempest lay upon them." They love now to trace all the mystic windings in that untoward voyage; the "deep calling to deep,"—the wave responding to wave. They love to think, "It was *thus* He brought me!" There was a time when I was prone to question His wisdom—to arraign His faithfulness; but now, I could not have wanted one thorn, one bitter drop, one tear. As the contrary winds which carry high the migratory birds are found in reality to assist their flight: so with the soul; when the winds

are contrary—the storm beating fiercely,—it only leads it to soar higher and higher—upwards and heavenwards—further from earth—nearer its God! Oh, if we only saw our trials, not through the misty haze of this world, but in the light of eternity; the reckoning would not be this, how *little* they have been, but how *precious* they have been! How all (yes, *all*) were needed to effect the desired end, all were composite parts of one way, and that way was *love*! It is with the believer as with the diamond; the more facets there are, the brighter it sparkles;—so, the more the tools of sanctified affliction have been on him, the brighter and more gloriously will he shine in heaven!

Let me seek, then, to look beyond these portals of sadness, and repose on the glory that is to be revealed. Soon the curfew-bell of time will toll, telling that the fires of affliction and trial are extinguished for ever, and that the weary and jaded citizens—the weary Church—may now retire to the rest which remaineth for the people of God! “Live in Christ,” says Rutherford, “and you are in the suburbs of heaven. There is but

a thin wall between you and the land of praises. Ye are within one hour's sailing of the shore of the new Canaan."

It is a mighty procession that is sweeping onwards to the Land of Promise. A sainted writer has beautifully compared it to the vast host of Israel entering the earthly Canaan. Some had crossed Jordan; their footsteps were treading the covenanted soil, the land of the patriarchs—others were passing through the river-channel, the waters standing up to make a way "for the ransomed to pass over;"—others were patiently occupying their allotted place in the rear, until those that preceded them had traversed the dry bed of the border river. But *all* were moving on; and those furthest behind knew that every tread of their footstep was bringing them nearer the moment when their desert trials and privations would be at an end, and their voices too would blend in the song of victory. And so it is with the Church of God on earth. Some are already in heaven;—the glorified, safe on the Canaan side. Some are at this moment crossing

the Jordan of death—the dark river separating the wilderness from the heavenly land. Some are still in the pilgrim rear, amid the smouldering fires and ashes of their encampment, casting a longing glance towards those who have already begun their everlasting ascription of praise. But the mighty mass moves on! The desert is retreating and the heavenly shores are nearing. Thousands on thousands of the ransomed Israel of God are already safe landed,—“clean escaped,” and their triumphant song should only inspire us with fresh ardour to follow their steps and share their crowns! The true Joshua-Jesus, the Heavenly Precursor, is even now standing on the celestial shore, and to every faint and toil-worn traveller proclaiming, “These sufferings are not to be compared with the glory about to be revealed!”

How the thought of that blessed Heaven of eternal respite and rest, should reconcile me to any trial the Lord may see meet to lay upon me here! It was the prospect of future glory which led this heavenly reckoner to

make so little of his earthly trials. He called that a "*light affliction*," which he had borne for thirty years!

Let me often school myself in the devout arithmetic of the tried Apostle—putting all my trials into one scale, and all the blessings, from grace to glory, which my God bestows, into the other, and then dare I murmur?

Lord! it is my prayer that my trial (my peculiar trial), be what it may, may be sanctified. It is a "muffled drum" in the march of life; but it is beating "*Home, brothers! home!*" Let every promise of Scripture seem as if a bright angel hung out from the skies a guiding signal, saying, "The darkness will soon be past, and the true light will shine!" "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry," and *then*, the reckonings of *earthly* trial will give way to the reckonings of unending bliss. The voice of the Beloved will thus be heard calling on His weeping Bride to dry every tear and prepare for a tearless home—"Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth. The time of the singing of birds is

come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away !" (Song of Sol. ii. 12.)

“ Where'er my path
On earth shall lead, I'll keep a nesting bough
For Hope, the song-bird, and with cheerful step
Hold on my pilgrimage, remembering where
Flowers have no autumn-languor, Eden's **g**ate
No flaming sword, to guard the tree of life.”



XXII.



The Marriage-Supper.

“Open is the starry hall ;
Hear ye ! 'tis the Bridegroom's call !
Holy virgins, one and all,
Ready stand,
For the heavenly festival
Is at hand !

“Come at last the nuptial day ;
Tears for ever pass'd away—
Fled the prison-house—the clay,
And the thrall ;
Christ for ever your sure stay,
And your all !”

“Blessed are they that are called to the marriage-supper
of the Lamb.”—REV. xix. 9.



UNDER a new and beautiful symbol, we
are called to behold Jesus as the Hea-
venly Bridegroom, seated at His own
marriage-feast, summoning His glorified guests
around Him !—the true Solomon, “crowned in
the day of His espousals, and the day of the

gladness of His heart!" (Song of Sol. iii. 11.) "Alone," says a writer, "in the depths of eternity stood Christ and His Church before the altar of that divine espousal; none was witness but the Father and the Holy Spirit when the vow was plighted, and the contract sealed."* But all Heaven is now to be spectator of the glad some consummation. The bridal-day is come! He has "*sent His angels with a great sound of a trumpet to gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other,*" and lo! a multitude which no man can number, "all-glorious within, their clothing of wrought gold," are seen passing through the gates of the city "with gladness and rejoicing," on their way to the King's palace! The Bride for six thousand weary years has been calling for her Lord to "*Come!*" The voice of the Beloved has at last been heard; the King has "*brought her into His banqueting-house, and His banner over her is love!*" (Song of Sol. ii. 4)

In that scene of festive joy, behold—

(1.) *Jesus glorified.*

• Butler.

“*He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.*” Oh, what a moment of joy will that be to the Church’s Divine Head, when all His blood-bought people (not one of the sealed myriads wanting) shall be assembled with Him to share His bliss;—“betrothed unto Him for ever;”—“presented a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing!” If “Wisdom” rejoiced in the mere *anticipation* of redemption,—if even then His “delights were with the sons of men” dwelling in “the habitable parts of the earth,” (Prov. viii. 31,) what will the rejoicing be, when the vast undertaking is all completed, and the trophies of His grace are seated by His side! What a new and more glorious meaning will be given to His words of intercession on earth: “*All thine are mine, and mine are thine, and I am glorified in them!*” (John xvii. 10.) It is *their* glory and joy in which much of His own mediatorial happiness will consist. As “the Master,” He girds Himself at the marriage-feast, and “comes forth to serve them,” (Luke xii. 37.) He has them in view in His every thought of Heaven: “I go

to prepare a place for *you*, . . . that where *I am*, there *ye* may be also"—“I shall drink no more of the fruit of the vine until *I* drink it new *with you* in my Father's kingdom,” (John xiv. 2, 3 ; Matt. xxvi. 29.)

(2.) *Behold the Church glorified.*

“*Called*” to the Master's immediate presence, not to eat of the crumbs falling from His table, but of the children's bread ; to see His face ; to participate in His triumph ; and with faith changed into sight, and hope into full fruition, to exclaim, “*My Beloved is mine, and I am his !*” (Song of Sol. ii. 16.)

Seated at the supper-table ! What nearness and intimacy of fellowship is here indicated ! Even on earth, the believer's most blissful hours are those spent in intimate communion with his Lord. How the pain and weariness of the sick-bed are alleviated—how the pang of the crushing bereavement has been mitigated, by that Presence and Name which puts music and joy into the saddest heart ! What will it be in glory, with no sin to mar our intercourse, and no sorrow to dim our eye,—the consummated union

and communion of everlasting love ! Truly, the glorified guests will be able to say to their heavenly Lord, as was said in His hearing at a marriage-feast on earth, "Thou hast kept the best wine till now !" (John ii. 10.) On that coronation-day of the Church triumphant, angels will listen with amazement, as each ransomed one tells the story of blended grace and faithfulness ;—principalities and powers will stoop to hear the Church's perpetual *Te Deum*, the keynote of which will be, "*the manifold wisdom of God!*" (Eph. iii. 10.) It will not be with the disciples in heaven as with the disciples below. When they got a momentary glimpse of their Lord's glory on Tabor, we read, "They *feared* as they entered the cloud," (Luke ix. 34.) Perfect love will then cast out fear. It is no Stranger,—no inaccessible, awe-inspiring Being who is to gather them around Him. It will indeed be a day of *Kingly* espousals. On His head there will be "many crowns." The Bride will "enter the *King's* palace," (Ps. xlv. 15.) It will be a regal—a coronation anthem that will be sung by the lips of the hundred and forty-

four thousand, "*Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent* REIGNETH," (Rev. xix. 6.) But it is also called the "marriage-supper of *the Lamb*;"—"that same Jesus" who in His person is so well known to us on earth,—whose character and life are so beautifully and truthfully portrayed in what we may call His four inspired biographies, that we seem to feel as if we knew Him—knew Him intimately;—had seen Him,—had sat with Him on Tiberias' shores, and talked with Him at Jacob's well, and wept with Him at the Bethany grave! We enjoy to be with those who have been kind to us; who so kind as "*the MAN Christ Jesus!*" what fellowship so blissful as with the all-glorious One, who hath loved us with a love, in comparison with which the most endearing earthly friendship is coldness itself! How joyous when *He* shall meet us at the threshold of glory, and conduct us to the coronation-hall, to receive our crowns, and to become guests at His table!

(3.) *Behold here a holy and happy meeting between guest and guest.*

The unfeemly estrangements of the present will there be unknown for ever. Cold looks, and averted faces, and distant and uncordial recognitions, will be all at an end. The guests will only wonder they could have allowed petty differences to have sundered them so long and so strangely below. *Like* their beloved Lord, they will become *like* one another. Many a Christian on earth, we believe, is nearer in heart and love and sympathy to a brother Christian, than the conventional distinctions—the Shibboleth of sect and party—will permit him to avow. In Heaven there will be no such reserve. The slumbering harmonies of the heart will then break forth, without one jarring note.

Let me delight often to carry my eye onward to the celebration of these espousals—to draw aside the world's scenes of painted glory, and to get a sight of “the invisible;”—the great Sabbath of eternity inaugurated by this nuptial festival, where every redeemed Vessel, like the earthly types at Cana, are “filled to the brim;” Jesus, who went forth from His eternal throne

as the weeping "Man of sorrows," now come again with rejoicing, to bring all His ransomed sheaves with Him ! (Ps. cxxvi. 6.)

"Wilt thou not," says Baxter, "be almost ready to draw back, and say, 'What ! I, Lord ? I, the unworthy neglecter of Thy grace, disesteemer of Thy blood, and slighter of Thy love, must *I* have this glory ? I am utterly unworthy to be called a son.' But Love will have **it so**. Therefore thou must enter into His joy."

"The watchers on the mountain
Proclaim the Bridegroom near ;
Go, meet Him as He cometh,
With hallelujahs clear.

"The marriage-feast is waiting,
The gates wide open stand ;
Up ! up ! ye heirs of glory,
The Bridegroom is at hand."



XXIII.



The Brimming Fountain.

“Blessed day which hastens fast,
End of conflict and of sin,
Death itself shall die at last,
Fulness of all joy begin.
Then eternity shall prove
God is Light and God is Love!”

“In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there
are pleasures for evermore.”—Ps. xvi. 11.

“**F**ULNESS *of joy!*” Can that be said
of anything on this side Heaven?
There is a restless craving in the hu-
man bosom for something better than this world
can give.

“Although its heart is rich in pearls and ores,
The sea complains upon a thousand shores;
Sea-like, we moan for ever. We are weak—
We ever hunger for diviner stores.”

There are aching voids—deep, yawning

chafms in the soul of man, which the world and all its tinsel pleasures can never fill. Hope is ever gilding the future with the prospect of that happiness which the present denies. Lured and dazzled, the worldling pursues the phantom. But each successive failure more painfully convinces him that all here is a delusion, an ignis-fatuus gleam. Happiness, the object of his life-search, is as far from him as ever !

These longings of the heart are only satisfied when it finds in God its "*fulness of joy*." The old nature, like the old philosophy, *will* cleave to the *world* as the centre of its system. It holds its happiness to consist in "minding earthly things." The new nature, like Copernicus, finds out "the secret hid from ages and generations." It dethrones a usurping earth, and makes all its affections circle and constellate around God Himself, the true "*Sun of the soul*." What will this be in that blessed world of purity, where there will be no disturbing forces to interfere with the saint's spiritual orbit, or dim and darken the emanations from the great Source of light and life, happiness and joy ! Happi-

ness even on earth is proportioned to the *worthiness* of the object on which our hearts are fixed in connection with it. What must be the happiness of the glorified spirit which has its affections centred on Him who is unsearchable in His wisdom, boundless in His resources, unchanging in His love! David said regarding earthly things—"I have seen an end of all perfection." In Heaven the soul will have, in the enjoyment of God, the perfection of bliss. All the perfection of earth is finite; that is infinite. All earthly ✓ bliss has its bounds and limits; in Heaven and in God's presence that bliss will be unbounded.

Think of the happiness of having no unfulfilled desire, nothing to be dreaded, nothing to be delivered from! To have the vision and fruition of God to guarantee all, and stamp permanency and immutability on every joy. Insecurity is the attribute of all worldly joys. Ours to-day, they may be gone to-morrow. How the thought of the slender tie which binds to life must haunt the idolater of earthly affection!—that in the twinkling of an eye the cup of creature-love may be dashed from his lips;—his most fondly

cherished fabric become a heap of humiliating ruins! Often in one's happiest moments we have (do as we like) the chilling presentiments of coming trial—the feeling, *All this cannot last*. This gladsome music,—earth's high holiday,—may this night give place to the dirge of sorrow!

In Heaven, “our sun shall no more go down.” No real or imagined evils will loom in a troubled future—the music of its eternal festival will never be suspended or hushed by the intrusion of sadder notes. *Here*, one main source of the believer's joy is in the words, “*no condemnation!*” *There*, it will rather be, “*no separation!*” His sorrow will be turned into joy, and that joy no one will take from him. The wheat will be “gathered into the garner.” So long as it is unharvested—standing in the open field—it is exposed to furious winds and corroding rains. But the angel-reapers have made it secure. These garnered sheaves of bliss are as safe as everlasting love and faithfulness and power can make them!

And while it is “*fulness of joy*,” (denoting its *perfection*) and “pleasures for evermore,” (denot-

ing their *security*) let us not forget the nobler and grander attribute of that heavenly bliss—"In Thy presence." Is it this which is drawing me to Heaven—the prospect of being admitted into union and communion with my God? Some are impatient to leave this world, because they have been the victims of disappointed hope and crossed affections. In a fit of morbid moroseness, they hate life, and look to the grave as a refuge from its ills! Am I conscious of nobler and loftier motives in my heavenward aspirations? Is it the thought of *seeing* GOD, *enjoying* GOD, *loving* GOD, which is drawing me there? Other hallowed ties and motives I may have, beckoning me upwards. Voices hushed on earth may be stealing down, in tones of celestial music, from the spirit-land;—"The Bride" (the blessed dead, among whom my fondest earthly memories linger) may be saying, "*Come*." But do I feel that even such a sacred incentive as this, is subordinate to the voice of the *Bridegroom*?—that these are but star-light glories, compared to the meridian sun—"the glory that excelleth?" Oh! how wondrous the thought that God's pleasures

are to be my pleasures—that I am to be linked through eternity in congeniality of sentiment and enjoyment with essential goodness, essential greatness, essential love! I will joy in God, and the Lord my God will rejoice over *me*. He shall make me to “drink of the river of His pleasures!” (Ps. xxxvi. 8.)

And soon—very soon—all this happiness may be mine. A few more beats of the pulse—a few more falling grains of the sandglass, and I may be by that river’s brink, washing off the dust and scars of battle, and bathing in the floods of ineffable joy! Meanwhile, let me seek to aspire after closer and more intimate communion with God, so as to feel that no blessing on earth can be comparable to His favour, and no loss equal to the forfeiture of His love. Let me often think of death as the moment which will admit me into the full possession of this transcendent bliss; and see the promises of the gospel, like so many lights hung out from the windows of my Father’s house, beckoning me Home!

“ Onwards, upwards may I move,
Wafted on the wings of love ;
Looking, Lord, for Thee to come,
Longing for my heavenly home ;
There for ever to remain,
Partner of Thine endless reign ;
There Thy face unveil'd to see,
Find my Heaven of Heaven in THEE ! ”



XXIV.



"It seemed not as a dream, and yet I stood
Beside heaven's gate. Its mighty valves were loosed;
And upward, from earth's tribulation, came
A soul, whose passport, signed in Calvary's blood,
Prevailed. Around the golden threshold's verge
I saw the dazzling of celestial wings
Thronging to welcome it. The towering form
Of an archangel bore it company
Up to God's throne!"

"To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise."—

LUKE xxiii. 43.



WHEN shall I be admitted into this glorious Heaven—to pluck for myself the Grapes of Eshcol, and enjoy the sweets of the true Land of Promise? Does the hour of death usher me at once into the mansions of my heavenly Father? or is there some intermediate state of purification, preparatory to being introduced into the presence of the Lord? Is the

disembodied spirit destined meanwhile to remain in dream-land—a condition of unconsciousness and torpor—till awoke by the trump of God, along with the risen and glorified body, on the resurrection morning?

We have already seen, in a previous Meditation, that the Bible answer is explicit. We may return for a little, to ponder the same comforting theme. There is an “*immediate entrance*.” The same moment in which I close my eyes on a world of sin and suffering, I open them in glory. Whenever I pass through the swellings of Jordan, my feet shall touch the shores of “the better country;”—*that day* I am “with Jesus in paradise!”

St Paul’s verdict, as we previously noted, is conclusive: “*Having a desire to depart and to BE WITH CHRIST*,” (Phil. i. 23.) Can we suppose he would have expressed this longing desire to leave his work—to abandon his apostleship—to forego the delight of winning souls to Jesus—if his spirit, in leaving this earth, was to slumber in a state of inaction and unconsciousness till the day of God? We can conceive of no other

possible consideration but the thought of being ushered into the immediate presence of his Lord, that could make it to him a "gain to die." Nothing BUT this instantaneous beatific vision and fruition could have led him to add the strong assertion, "*which is far better,*" (Phil. i. 23.)

Again, how does he speak of the dissolution of the earthly *tent* ("tabernacle")? He seldom speaks more confidently. His words are expressed in the authoritative and confident *formula* of a creed, "*We KNOW that if this house of our earthly tabernacle is dissolved, we HAVE a building of God,*" (2 Cor. v. 1.) The pin is taken out—the cord is slipped—the tent is down! But "*immediately*" a nobler and more imperishable structure rises—"an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens!"

Why would he urge, in another place,—as an incentive to believers to run the Christian race,—that they are gazed upon by a cloud of sainted witnesses, (Heb. xii.,) (mentioned in the previous context,) if "the spirits of the just" remain in a state of unconsciousness till the final resurrection?

Can we suppose that Stephen, as he gazed upwards from his martyr-pillow on "the general assembly and church of the first-born," uttered an unanswered prayer, when he said, "*Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*"? (Acts viii. 59.) Nay, rather, when he saw his Lord "*standing* at the right hand of God," can we think the beautiful comment of Chrysostom an unnatural one, that the Saviour rose and stooped from His throne, to receive with outstretched arms the spirit of the first of that "noble army of martyrs," who were afterwards to "praise Him?"

Our blessed Lord's own teaching is all confirmatory of the same view. It was no mere accidental drapery, surely, in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, but an essential part of the truth it was intended to convey, when the angels are represented as carrying the spirit of the beggar into Abraham's bosom; and His words here to the dying thief are themselves (independent of all other proof) sufficient to set at rest this comforting assurance, that the gate of death and the gate of glory are one!

Vision adds its attestation to parable—for the

ransomed multitude are represented *now* in glory, "standing before the throne" with "palms in their hands," (Rev. vii. 9.) Thrice blessed thought! The uncaged spirit will all at once fly upwards to nestle in the golden eaves of Heaven! The saint, when he enters glory, can say, in the words of one of earth's inspired songs regarding the death-bed he has just left, "*I laid me down and slept—I awaked, for the Lord sustained me!*" (Ps. iii. 5.) "*This is none other than the house of God, this is the gate of heaven!*" (Gen. xxviii. 17.) "Faithful souls," says Richard Baxter, "no sooner leave their pinions of flesh, but angels will be their convoy, Christ, with all the perfected spirits of the just, will be their companions, heaven will be their residence, and God their happiness." No wonder that St Paul with such a blessed certainty could say, "*We are CONFIDENT and WILLING rather to be absent from the body and PRESENT WITH THE LORD,*" (2 Cor. v. 8.)

It is true, indeed, that though "the souls of believers are at death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory," their *full*

and *perfect* glorification does not then take place. The great coronation-day of the Church triumphant must come, before the saint ("complete in Christ") be invested with all his purchased privileges. The body till then, slumbers in weakness and dishonour. Its reunion with the spirit must take place,—the grave must be rifled of its treasures,—ere the Divine Victor have reaped in all His trophies, and the believer receive full investiture of his rights. A writer beautifully speaks of the "blest dead," as "a silent and veiled company, like the gathering worshippers of earth resting side by side till the bells cease, and vacant places fill, and all begin to sing one anthem." But be their present *intermediate* condition (shall we call it) what it may, they are *with Christ*—that is enough.

"*With me!*" Safe in the presence of their adorable Redeemer. The needle at last fixed true to its pole—all the old earthly vibrations and oscillations at an end;—the ship, with all its tossings over, has reached its port, cast anchor in "the Rock" within the veil! The sun-flower drooped only for a moment in the evening of

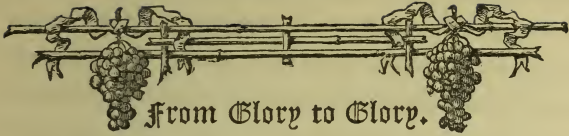
life, as the death-shades fell over it. But the morning of glory dawns;—The Sun of Righteousness shines; and in His “unfetting beams” the leaves expand again, in unfading and undying glory. “*With ME!*” Christ in our nature, our Friend, our Brother! We are happy on earth in the presence of those who have befriended us, and given us proofs of kindness and affection. Who has ever been friend or brother to us like Jesus? Eternity is a solemn word. Death ushers into an untravelled country. The soul mounts in its arrowy flight into a region which “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard.” BUT *Christ is there*; and that assurance invests it with a home-like aspect. I need not fear the fords of Jordan, when there is a well-known voice heard on the farther shores,—“*Fear not! It is I! Be not afraid!*” (Matt. xiv. 27.)

Let me look forward, then, with bounding heart, to the hour of death, as the hour of my entrance on endless bliss, the birthday of eternity. Oh, if there was “joy in heaven among the angels of God” at the hour of conversion, what will it be at the hour of glorification! If

God the Father even on earth has joy in seeing His returning prodigal ; what will it be when He welcomes him to his everlasting home ! *“He will rejoice over him with joy ; He will rest in His love ; He will rejoice over him with singing,”* (Zeph. iii. 17.) The Redeemer utters His intercessory prayer over the death-bed on earth—*“Father, I will that this one whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, to behold my glory.”* The prayer is heard ;—the angels are sent down ;—and, swift as the volleyed lightning leaps from the cloud, THAT HOUR, and *for ever, he is “with Jesus in paradise !”*



XXV.



"When this aching heart shall rest,
All its busy pulses o'er,
From her mortal robes undrest,
Shall my spirit upward soar;
Then shall ever-growing joy
All my thoughts and powers employ.

"Jesus reigns—the life, the sun,
Of that wondrous world above;
All the clouds and storms are gone—
All is light, and all is love.
All the shadows melt away
In the blaze of glorious day."

LANGE.

"The path of the just is as the shining light, that
shineth more and more unto the perfect day."—PROV.
iv. 18.



As the Believer's path on earth is, or ought
to be, a progressive one, in knowledge,
love, happiness, and joy; so, in a loftier
and more ennobling sense, will it be in a future
world. The sun of his bliss will ever be climb-

ing higher and higher the firmament, but yet never attaining its full meridian. Heaven, indeed, as we have seen in a former Meditation, would be wanting in one chief element of happiness were advancement unknown. The glorified spirit, constituted as our feelings at present are, would not be satisfied with a *stationary* bliss. "Perfect security from all danger of a *change for the worse*, is a highly gratifying idea; but the expectation of a change for the *better*, is an essential ingredient in all our present notions of happiness."* The Redeemed in heaven—"vessels of glory" "fitted for the Master's use"—while they will be always filled, yet, if it seem not a paradox, they will be always filling;—ever increasing in the divine knowledge and likeness, progressing along the line of infinite blessedness flowing from God's presence and smile.

It is the privilege of the believer, even in this world, to be ever aspiring after a more intimate acquaintance with the Divine character, works, and ways. *David*, notwithstanding all that he had seen of Jehovah, says, "*My soul* THIRSTETH

* Whately.

FOR GOD," (Ps. xlii. 2.) *Paul*, notwithstanding his exalted attainments, prays, "*That I MAY KNOW HIM*," (Phil. iii. 10.) The whole Christian dispensation, from the earliest times till now, has been *progressive* in its character. Those living anterior to the flood had but dim perceptions of the glorious things which our eyes have seen, and our ears have heard. Redemption was more fully unfolded to the patriarchs—more fully still to the prophets—and "in these last days," in which He has "spoken unto us by His Son," more fully than all. This gradual development will still characterise "the ages to come"—each cycle of these ages evolving some new manifestation of the Divine character and attributes. As the saints advanced on earth from grace to **g**race;—so now it will be ascending from "glory to glory,"—each new pause on the steep of the everlasting hills only unfolding new and more amazing discoveries of God's grace and love. Nor shall we ever reach that point where our knowledge of the Infinite will be complete—where we shall be able to fold the wing in its upward soaring. An old English writer beauti-

fully compares the believer's knowledge of God in a future world, to the two well-known mathematical lines, which, though approaching nearer and nearer to one another, never meet. So the ransomed spirit, borne upwards nearer and nearer the great Sun of all knowledge, will never reach the confines of that light which is spoken of as "inaccessible, and full of glory." Every new height reached in the infinite progress of the soul, while it will give more insight into the mysteries of God's dealings, will only inspire with greater longings to know more of His ineffable glories. The song of the redeemed is represented as waxing louder and louder, the more that the mingled wisdom, and faithfulness, and love of the Almighty is unfolded. "The voice of a great multitude" increases to the "noise of many waters;"—deeper still, to "the voice of mighty thunderings," (Rev. xix. 6.) Here we are but children-dreamers. Our path lies through misty shadows and murky clouds;—our sun, either smiting with its beams, or wading through a stormy sky, or "going down while it is yet day." Here, the believer

walks in darknes and can see no light; or when he has light for a time, it is often fitful and tranfient; like the luminous wake of a vessel on a midnight sea, which gilds, only for a moment, the waves over which it bounds, and then leaves them as dark as ever. But once acrofs the threshold of glory, the "darknes is paf, and the true light shineth." His, then, is an "unfmiting and unfetting fun." "*The fun fhall not fmite thee,*" fays one, (Ps. cxxi. 6.) "*Thy fun fhall no more go down,*" fays another, (Ifa. lx. 20.) It is called "*the inheritance of the fain*t*s IN LIGHT,*" (Col. i. 12.)

Have I begun this path of heavenly love and knowledge now? Am I progreffing in it? Do I feel fome dawns of the heavenly light,—earnefts and antepafs of the full day of glory? Let all God's dealings ferve to quicken me in my way. Let every affliction it may pleafe Him to fend, be as the moving pillar-cloud of old, beckoning me to move my tent onwards—faying, "*Arife ye, and depart, for this is not your ref,*" (Mic. ii. 10.) Let me be often ftanding now on faith's lofty eminences, looking for "the

day of God"—the rising sun which is to set no more in weeping clouds.

Wondrous progression! How will all earth's learning,—its boasted acquirements and eagle-eyed philosophy,—sink into the lisps of very infancy in comparison with this manhood of knowledge! Heaven will be the true "*Excelsior*." Its song, "*a song of degrees*;"—Jesus leading His people from height to height of glory, and saying, as He said to Nathanael, "*Thou shalt see GREATER things than these!*" (John i. 50.)

And—most elevating thought of all!—I shall be advancing gradually in resemblance to my Divine Lord and Master! And yet the further I advance, with more fervent lip and devout ardour shall I sing,—

"*Nearer, my God, to Thee!*
Nearer to Thee!
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to Thee!
Nearer to Thee!"



XXVI.



The Heavenly Firmament.

“They stand, those walls of Zion,
Conjubilant with song ;
And bright with many an angel,
And many a martyr throng.

“The Prince is ever near them ;
The light is aye serene ;
The pastures of the blessed
Are deck'd in glorious sheen.

“And they, beneath their Leader,
Who conquer'd in the fight,
For ever, and for ever,
Are clad in robes of light.”

BERNARD of *Cluny* (12th Century.)

“They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn *many to righteousness* as the stars for ever and ever.”—DAN. xii. 3.



ERE is another Grape from the Eshcol clusters -- another glimpse of coming glory. Though suggestive of truths on which we have already dwelt, these may well

bear repetition, presenting us, under a different aspect, with fresh motives and encouragements for pursuing with ardour our heavenly way.

We are here reminded that *there will be different gradations of bliss in a coming Heaven.*

The "wise" are to have one reward; *"they that turn many to righteousness"* will have a higher and greater.

This system of gradation obtains throughout all the other diverse works of the Creator, and it may in this respect be taken as a shadow of heavenly things. In the material world, we ascend from the grain of dust and invisible atom, by giant strides, to satellites, planets, suns. In our own globe, we have the pleasing diversity and undulation of surface, from the little tumuli on the bosom of the plain, to the stupendous Alp and Andes. In the vegetable kingdom, we have a graduating scale, from the tiny moss and lichen and blade of grass, through the ascending series of plants and shrubs to the monarch oak and cedar. In the animal kingdom, we ascend from the animalcule and mollusc to the lordly

lion. A still higher step brings us to the region of human intellect and intelligence ; while this, again, in its diversities of ranks, affords fresh evidence of the law of which we speak.

It will be the same in glory. There will be varying eminences in the Heavenly landscape—diversified grades in the Heavenly family. It will have its “thrones and dominions,” its “principalities and powers”—the “*first*” and the “*least* in the kingdom.”

God, in a striking passage in the prophecies of Isaiah, represents “the fir, the pine-tree, and the box *together*,” as “beautifying the place of His sanctuary,” (Isa. lx. 13.) It is a picture of the heavenly courts—the celestial gardens. An assemblage of diverse trees, each perfect in their kind, from the lowly box to the stately pine. But they are “*together*,”—in the same place ;—a glorious group,—each branch and each leaf combining to “beautify” the holy place ;—glorifying the “house of His glory!” (Isa. lx. 7.)

The verse further tells us, that *all in Heaven will be happy*.

The "wise,"—that is, they who have sought on earth the true "wisdom which cometh from above"—they who have reposed with undivided and unwavering trust in Christ, the "*Wisdom of God;*"—who have been diligent in the cultivation of personal piety,—*they* shall shine "*as the brightness of the firmament.*" They may have been little known on earth; their graces may have shone dimly and in obscurity; their faith may have even been comparatively weak, and their love languid and fitful;—yet, being "the children of the kingdom," they will be invested with a happiness beyond the power of heart to conceive, or tongue to tell.

Let each ask, "Am I among the number of these 'wise'?" Let me see to it that mine is not the mere lamp of profession, destitute of the oil of grace, leaving me at last among the foolish "dreamers" and loiterers upon whom "the door is shut!" Let me make religion a matter of earnest, downright, *personal* concernment. Let me prove in my happy experience even now, that wisdom's ways are "*ways of pleasantness,*" and wisdom's paths "*paths of peace.*" So that at

last, in the day when He "maketh up His jewels," I may be "*a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of my God!*" (Isa. ii. 3.)

This verse further reminds us, that *there will be pre-eminent rewards and blessedness in store for those who have been energetic in the cause and service of God on earth.*

I must seek to be "*wise*" first,—to have my own soul deeply imbued with Divine things,—to have a personal and saving interest in the great salvation. But if I be aspiring after Heaven's loftiest recompense, I must "*add*" to my faith "*fortitude*," and the other exalted graces of the Christian character, (2 Pet. i. 5.) The privilege of shining as the fixed stars "*for ever and ever*," is reserved for "*those who turn many unto righteousness.*"

There is a Christianity—a true and sincere life of faith—which, though we cannot call it selfish, is more negative, and less influential and expansive, than it ought to be. Like the quiet lake into which a stone has fallen, the centre of

the heart has been touched by a sanctified power ; but we see at best only dim indications of the widening circles of beneficence and charity, self-denying love and holy deed. The nobler phase which true religion assumes, is that which manifests a diffusive influence : when the believer becomes an “ epistle of Christ, known and read of all men ; ”—a living tree, not only deeply rooted in faith and love, but waving with the fruits of holy living and holy acting,—love towards God expanding into a sanctified love towards all mankind. Following the footsteps of the Great Exemplar, he delights in doing good, and in attracting sinners to that glorious righteousness which is “ unto all, and upon all them that believe,” (Rom. iii. 22.)

While the faithful ambassador of Christ, the honoured and self-denying missionary, are those who are pre-eminently referred to in this ennobling promise, it dare not be limited or restricted to these. Those in humbler and less prominent spheres in the Church and the world, have an equal warrant to appropriate it. It is a bold and beautiful figure, intended to express the re-

compense in store for earnest individual effort—whether by station, money, influence, or character—in the cause of God. The pious parent, the faithful teacher, the district visitor, the devout philanthropist, the generous giver for the sake of Christ; and, more than all, those who exhibit the hallowed power of a devout, unselfish, Christ-like demeanour, the every-day and perpetual lesson of a holy walk and a holy life;—these are hereafter to shine as the brightest constellations in the celestial firmament. There are many stars invisible to us, which are exerting an important influence among the heavenly bodies. So there are many lowly believers whose influence now is unknown—invisible—secret,—who are yet telling upon others, often most powerfully, when least conscious of it themselves. The calm eloquence of a Christian's life and a Christian's death has impressed and convinced, when the most laboured pulpit oratory has been of no avail. Remember the Bible picture of the judgment-day. "What! I saw *Thee* an hungered, or naked, or thirsty!—I, who occupied no promi-

nent part in Thy Church on earth!—I, a lowly believer who lived and died in obscurity!" It is enough! "*Ye did it to the least of these my brethren,*" and in doing so, "*ye did it unto ME!*" (Matt. xxv. 40.)

Be it mine to aspire after higher and higher manifestations of Christian excellence. Let me take the lofty motto of the apostle: "*Not as though I had already attained;*"—"always abounding in the work of the Lord," (Phil. iii. 12; 1 Cor. xv. 58.) The more of practical holiness now, the more of transcendent blessedness hereafter. The original *one* pound deposit may, by diligent trading, gain me ten pounds, (Luke xix. 18.) As "the sleep of the labouring man" is said to be "sweet," so, sweeter will be the rest of glory to those who have toiled bravely, and worked earnestly. Not one trifling seed of all I sow can be lost. It will spring up at last, and yield an hundredfold of recompense, to the praise, and honour, and glory of God.

Is there nothing I can do in the way of turning some of my fellow-sinners to righteousness?

What a transcendent honour to hear through eternity from the lips of some glorified saint, "*You* were the means of leading me first to think of my soul! *You* were the first to unfold to me the beauty and glory of the Saviour's character, and His infinite adaptation to all the wants and necessities of my tried and suffering and tempted nature!" How blessed the thought, that as "jewels" set in Immanuel's crown, we shall, (like the gems of earth when placed in the same diadem) enhance by mutual reflection each other's brightness,—all redounding to the glory of Jesus, at whose feet each gem and each crown will be cast.

Reader! let not the poor engrossments of earth out-peer and eclipse the brightness of this glorious heritage. Seek to be able to say, with one who had heaven ever in his eye, "*We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are NOT seen!*" (2 Cor. iv. 18.) He seems to say, So glorious and out-dazzling are the prospects of coming glory, that they are like the sun extinguishing the taper. The things of

earth are not worth looking at,—they pale into nothing, when brought side by side with the grandeur of the future.

Hear your Lord's voice saying, "*Occupy till I come*," (Luke xix. 13.) Make the most of fleeting opportunities. The night of earth is "far spent," the day of eternity is close "at hand." Forget not, it is *now* or *never*. In most other earthly things, there are new chances,—new experiments; in familiar language, "we can try again." But, once across yonder boundary of time, and an irrevocable seal is stamped on the transactions of the past. The star takes its immutable place in the spiritual firmament: "*Where the tree falleth there it shall be.*"



XXVII.



The Victor's Song.

“Who are these in bright array,
This innumerable throng
Round the altar night and day,
Tuning their triumphant song?

“These through fiery trials trod,
These from great affliction came ;
Now, before the throne of God,
Seal'd with His eternal name.

“Clad in raiment pure and white,
Victor-palms in every hand,
Through their great Redeemer's **might**
More than conquerors they **stand**.

“Hush'd all sadness and all sighs,
Perfect love dispels their fears,
And for ever from their eyes
God has wiped away their tears.”

“And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels
round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders :
and the number of them was ten thousand times ten
thousand, and thousands of thousands ; saying with a

loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."—REV. v. 11, 12.



HERE is the Song of Heaven! It is sung by a mighty chorus,—concentric ranks of redeemed and unredeemed,—angels, archangels, cherubim, seraphim. The seer of Patmos gets only a distant glimpse of the vast multitude,—he sees a few twinkling lights, as it were, in the suburbs of the eternal city. But the voice borne to his ear is "*as the noise of many waters!*"

It is one section of that myriad throng on which the eye is most intently fixed—"THE ELDERS;"—*i. e.*, the ransomed from the earth.

How diverse and varied their antecedent histories! Some are there, who had died in infancy. Some, who on earth had grown gray in the service of their heavenly Master. Some, who had been arrayed in worldly greatness, but who were yet "clothed with humility"—into whose lap had been poured the full cup of prosperity, but whose lives had been consecrated as a perpetual thank-offering of praise to the Giver.

Others again, whose only earthly heritage was the beggar's hovel,—whose path had been strewn with thorns, and their eyes dimmed with tears,—yet who had borne all with unmurmuring submission. Some, who were champions of the faith—their names in all the churches. Others, “the Lord's hidden ones,”—their deeds of faith, and love, and charity, unknown to all save to Him who seeth in secret.

(1.) *This Vision speaks of the UNITY pervading the vast multitude.*

All unite in one song, “*Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!*” No one worshipper will look with supercilious eye on another. The angels great in might,—the cherubim burning with devotion,—the seraphim soaring in intellectual power,—will be bound to the lowliest saint in heaven by the one cementing principle of *love!* These “redeemed from the earth” may have lived in diverse periods of the world, different epochs of the Church;—they may have dwelt in different climes,—they may have lisped the name of Jesus in different tongues,—they may

have belonged to varied denominations,—wearing on earth different livery, and though looking to one Shepherd, may have clung to separate sheepfolds. Now, they are drawn into holy unity by the sweet attraction of the same cross. Having no longer any separate interests, each member of the glorified throng is actively employed in promoting the interests and happiness of his fellows. “Whether there be tongues, *they* shall cease,” (1 Cor. xiii. 8.) Language is now a greater barrier between church and church, than are mountains and rivers, continents and oceans; but these different dialects of earth shall then be merged into the one sublime language of eternity.

Well may the gifted author of the “Saint’s Rest” say, “What a blessed society will the family of heaven be, and those peaceful inhabitants of the new Jerusalem, where there is no division, nor differing judgments, nor disaffection, nor strangeness; no deceitful friendship—no, not one unkind expression, nor an angry look or thought; but all are one in Christ, who is one with the Father, and all live in the love of Him who is love itself.”

(2.) The sublime vision of John seems further to indicate, that *the Church triumphant will then be complete*. Not one heir of glory will be missing,—not one stone of the stupendous temple wanting,—not one sheaf of the glorious harvest lost. The number is “*ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands!*”

That was an hour of deep interest in the past, when the spirit of Abel entered Heaven, and stooped solitary and alone before the throne of God. He sung his song alone ; he was the sole representative of the redeemed Church,—the first sheaf in the future teeming harvest of ransomed immortals ! But *now* the Great Husbandman gathers the wheat into His garner, and, lo ! it is “*a multitude which no man can number!*” (Rev. vii. 9.) How gladdening to think that vast convocation is every day, every year increasing. When John was on earth it was a feeble band. He said, “We are of God *and the whole world lieth in wickedness!*” (1 John v. 19.) The Church then was like a spark in chaos—a tiny ark tossed on a great flood of evil ; but ere long, the number of His elect will be “as the sand on

the sea-shore." "The children of God" now "scattered abroad" will be brought in;—"the whole building, fitly framed together," will stand complete and glorious—a "holy temple in the Lord," (Eph. ii. 21.)

But (3.) the "*top-stone*" will be brought forth "with shoutings," and the cry will be "Grace, grace unto *it*," (Zech. iv. 7.) The song of this great multitude is an ascription of praise to a Redeeming God—"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!"

Yes! this will be the sweet bond of union—"all one in Christ Jesus." The hallelujah chorus of eternity will be the glorifying of His adorable Person and Name! How painful on earth it is to a generous heart, to see a kind and devoted friend unjustly calumniated and scorned. The believer is in this world constantly compelled to see his adorable Redeemer despised, rejected, slighted, blasphemed. *Then*, he will behold Him, honoured, lauded, "crowned Lord of all!" *Jesus glorified!*—we shall be "eye-witnesses of His majesty." If, even here, we delight

to see honour conferred on those we love,—how shall we exult in joining our feeble ascriptions with those of the great multitude, in celebrating the glory of Him whose love will there shine forth in all its peerless and transcendent magnitude!

“*The Lamb*”—“*the Lamb that was slain.*” It seems, at first, a strange name and a strange theme, in a place where suffering is unknown and where pain never enters! But it significantly tells, that the work of Christ is to be the theme of eternity; that it is the heights of Redeeming Love the saints are to be engaged in scaling;—the depths of grace they are to be engaged in fathoming. They will ever have the wondrous truth recalled, “*But* for that dying, bleeding Lamb, we must have been eternally lost;—*but* for that wondrous grace of His, ours must now, and for ever, have been a portion in the restless surges of that fiery burning lake! “Doubtless,” says Baxter, “this will be our everlasting admiration, that so rich a crown should fit the head of so vile a sinner. . . . Let *DESERVED* be written on the door of

Hell ; but on the door of Heaven and life, *The Free Gift.*"

Reader ! prepare for this lofty society,—the presence of angels—the presence of Jesus. Oh surpassing honour ! the prospect of being linked through everlasting ages with every glorious Being in the universe,—a brotherhood with seraphim, cherubim, saints, martyrs ;—yea, union and communion with God Himself !

If there be "joy in heaven among the angels of God over *one* sinner that repenteth ;" what will be that lofty burst of jubilee resounding from a ransomed Church, when *all* its members shall be gathered in ; and when the crowns of "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands," shall be cast at the feet of "Him who sitteth upon the throne" and "the Lamb, for ever and ever !"



XXVIII.



The Victor's Dress.

"Sweetest strains from soft harps stealing ;
 Trumpets, notes of triumph pealing ;
 Radiant wings and white stoles gleaming,
 Up the steps of glory streaming ;
 Where the heavenly bells are ringing,
 Holy, holy, holy ! singing
 To the mighty Trinity !
 Holy, holy, holy ! crying ;
 For all earthly care and sighing
 In that city cease to be."

THOMAS A KEMPIS, 1380.

"Clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands."
 —REV. vii. 9.



THAT a transition ! from earth to heaven,
 —from the mortal to the immortal,—
 from partial sanctification to complete
 and everlasting purity. The beggar "lifted from
 the dunghill," "set among princes," and caused
 to inherit "a throne of glory !" (1 Sam. ii. 8.)

*"Clothed with white robes, and palms in their
 hands."* It is a figurative representation of glo-

rified saints, as "*priests and kings unto God.*" The "white robe" is the *sacerdotal* emblem—the "palm" is the *kingly*. They are to have *censers* as well as *crowns*. They are to be employed as consecrated Levites in the Heavenly Temple, as well as to reign invested with regal dignity. As in all the Bible pictures of Heaven, so, here, there is a beautiful union of active *service* with royal *honour*. "His servants shall SERVE him"—"They shall *reign* for ever and ever," (Rev. xxii. 3, 5.)

The expression, "*standing* before the throne," denotes boldness, confidence, acceptance. They are "accepted in the Beloved." They could have no other boldness but in Jesus. Their robes derive all their whiteness, their palms all their greenness, from Him, before whom every palm is waved, and at whose feet every crown is cast. They sung by anticipation in their militant state, and they may love to repeat it still as "a song of remembrance"—

"Bold shall I *stand* at that great day;
For who ought to my charge shall lay?
While by Thy blood absolved I am,
From sin's tremendous guilt and shame!"

Have *I* this boldness and confidence now? Am I now clothed in the imputed righteousness of Immanuel? And do I look forward to the time when I shall stand arrayed also in the stainless robe of *personal* holiness—that “*raiment clean and white, which is the righteousness of the saints?*” (Rev. xix. 8.) Do I love to think of Heaven as a place of active employment; where, as a member of the glorified *priesthood*, I shall minister at God’s altar, and be emulous with zeal for His honour and glory? Jesus comes down *now* to earth to “sup” with me, (Rev. iii.) *Then* I shall sit down at His everlasting banquet, and hold uninterrupted fellowship with *Him*. “*THEY shall walk with ME in white, for they are worthy,*” (Rev. iii. 4.)

But I shall be a KING too. I shall stand *with a palm-branch in my hand!* The weapons of earthly toil and warfare will then be laid aside; the emblems of triumph and victory take their place. The Roman conqueror ascending to the Capitol of old, with the laurel on his brow, and the palm waving above his head, was a feeble type of the sinner saved by grace, passing

through the triumphal arch of glory, to receive "the crown of life" which his Lord has promised! "*The kings of the earth,*" we read, "*do bring their glory and honour unto it,*" (Rev. xxi. 24),—that is to say, all the pomp and splendour of earthly sovereignty is taken to typify and image forth the transcendent greatness of Heaven.

We may well pause and wonder at these royal honours in reserve for us! "KINGS *unto God!*" All the splendours of sovereignty, without its harassments and burdens! No thorn in the crown; no "suspended sword" from the "fretted ceiling," dimming the sparkling jewels with its shadow; and painfully reminding that the crown is "corruptible," often "defiled," always *fading!*"

In Rev. iv. 4 we read, that "round about the thrones were twenty-four seats," (or, as that might be better and more literally rendered, "twenty-four *thrones.*") Every head is to be a crowned one. "*I appoint unto you*" by covenant, says Christ, "*a KINGDOM, even as my Father hath appointed unto me,*" (Luke xxii. 29.) While be-

lievers are designated "a priesthood," they are a "*royal* priesthood,"—royally born—royally fed—royally attended—royally crowned! Some are to have regal authority "over five," some "over ten cities," according to the fidelity with which they have discharged their trusts during the period of earthly probation.

Am I preparing for these royal honours? Having "*palms* in their hands" indicates that, as victors and victorious, these sainted conquerors were once engaged in the strife of battle. Am I *fighting* now? Do I feel the world—my own heart—to be a battle-field, and that there is no discharge in that spiritual warfare till I reach the gates of glory? Let me not dream of the crown, unless I am conscious of striving for it. It is alone promised "*to him that overcometh,*" (Rev. iii. 21.) It has been quaintly said by a writer on this verse, that "*a station on the feet in front of the throne in heaven, is the effect of being often on the knees before the throne on earth.*" Oh for faith, and grace, and spiritual fortitude here, to "*fight the good fight of faith, and to lay hold on eternal life!*" (1 Tim. v. 12.)

How will the everlasting respite from pain and sorrow, corruption and sin, be all the more enjoyed, by reason of the struggles and conflicts which have preceded it!

Believer, think of this! Once within yonder peaceful gates, and the blood and dust of the earthly arena is washed away for ever. The long "white robe" speaks beautifully of this promised *rest*. The toil of the militant state is over. There may then be used the flowing vesture. There will be no need of fleeing, and of girding up the dress, when there is none to pursue. When we reach the battlements of glory, we shall be able to say, "*O enemy! destructions are now come to a PERPETUAL end,*" (Ps. ix. 6.)

Glorious time!—when we shall stand before the throne, faultless monuments of God's wondrous grace. How blessed if, at a dying hour, we can exclaim, in the prospect of this royal priesthood, this white robe, and evergreen palm, "*Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that day!*" (2 Tim. iv. 8.) "Be of good cheer, Christian, the time is near when

God and thou shalt be near, and *as* near as thou canst well desire. Thou shalt ever stand before Him; about His throne;—in the room with Him;—in His presence-chamber. Wouldst thou yet be nearer? Thou shalt be His child, and He thy Father. Yea, thou shalt be an heir of His kingdom.”





The Rightless World.

“And I with faltering footsteps journey on,
 Watching the stars that roll the hours away,
 Till the faint light that guides me now is gone,
 And, like another life, the glorious day
 Shall open o’er me from the empyreal height,
 With warmth, and certainty, and boundless light.”

“There shall be no night there.”—REV. xxii. 5.

HERE is another gleaning from the clusters of Canaan—another bright lamp hung out of our Father’s distant dwelling! Amid the falling shadows of earth, let us come and anticipate the noontide glories of the better world, and enumerate a few respects in which it may be said—“*There shall be no night there!*”

We found, in our first Meditation, Heaven spoken of under the emblem of *Rest*. The present figure is suggestive of kindred reflections; which, though in some respects an echo of the

former, we may, for the sake of the beautiful and expressive symbol itself, be permitted for a little to pursue.

There shall be no night of weakness or weariness there.

Here, we are incapable of serving God without intervals of repose. The weary, jaded framework requires a periodic cessation from activity. Tax either the body or mental powers over-much, and we are sure to suffer for it. *Here*, how often does *night* suggest the memory of pain and sickness—the fevered pulse—the throbbing brow—the sickly taper burning to its socket;—the terrible moments of anxiety, when the spirit of some loved one was struggling on the confines of eternity. Or, if the body be comparatively exempt from prostration or suffering, how often has the believer to complain of a weak and languishing frame of soul,—the chill dews of night-fall creeping over his best affections—nay, often deprived of the sensible tokens of God's presence and favour, groping in darkness and seeing no light! But, "*there is no night THERE!*" — no

languor to steal over the body—no lassitude to chain down and hamper the eagle-soarings of the spirit;—no physical weariness or debility to cause a cessation in the eternal song;—no remnants of corruption to produce one solitary moment or experience of estrangement from the great Source of all light, and love, and happiness! The tide of love ever full—never ebbing;—the sun of our bliss ever climbing higher and higher the meridian, and never shaded by so much as a passing cloud! “Oh! what a moment,” says a now sainted spirit, “will that be, when the lamp of faith will be suddenly extinguished—not amidst the darkness of eternal night—but *amid the splendours of everlasting day!*”

There shall be no night of ignorance there.

We are encompassed here on every side with enigmas;—the doctrines of Scripture (not a few of them) irreconcilable with the dogmas of proud reason. The ways of God!—they are often a “great deep”—misapprehended—misinterpreted! *Here*, we are in the twilight of our being;—Scripture speaks of it as “neither light nor dark.”

What, if revealed in broad day, would be all symmetrical in form, assumes dim and distorted and shadowy shapes. Even in the acquisition of *knowledge*, the mind climbs its tedious way by slow and laborious processes. The ore is dug by dint of incessant toil; and often when the coveted load is just reached, the jaded explorer has to resign his task! But *there*, the "glaß darkly" will give way to the "face to face." All will be made luminous. "In thy light," O God, "we shall see light." Knowledge, which is here the result of assiduous labour, will there be gained by intuition. To *see* will be to *understand*.

And what shall be said of what we call '*mysterious providences*?' Eternity will unravel every mazy labyrinth in them. It will be one of Heaven's loftiest occupations, studying the volumes of the past;—discovering them to be volumes of *faithfulness*;—every page, which on earth seemed blurred, will then stand forth in illuminated characters, endorsed with, "*God is Love!*" The cloudiest sky will be seen to have had its rainbow,—some token of covenant mercy. The higher we climb the mountains of

glory, the wider spread at our feet will be the discoveries of Jehovah's wisdom. There will be no more room for misgivings. The "why" and the "wherefore" of every earthly dealing will be revealed. "The channels of the deep waters will be all made plain, through which the Almighty held His darksome way."*

There shall be no night of sorrow there.

A melancholy minor runs its under-tone through all our present joys. Even when the cup is full, there is the aching thought, "This cannot always last." Even when the gourd is most flourishing, there is often the too truthful presentiment, that the worm may come;—in a moment, *it is DOWN!* *Night!*—poetry has ever spoken of it as the significant type and emblem of *Death*. How impressively it recalls that chamber of mysterious silence, where the footfall echoed no sound but its own, and the living lip of cherished friendship was sealed for ever! With how many the mind is like a hall draped in sackcloth,—the long winding passages of

* M'Ewen.

memory hung with portraits of those "who are not"—the memorials of buried love! But *there*, "sorrow and sighing will for ever flee away," (Isa. xxxiii. 10.) Joy will there be undiluted. The angel of death no longer crosses that threshold. Every shaft is expended. The last night of earth will be the last night of weeping. Not one shadow will flit across that bright firmament—not one scalding tear will dim the eyes of the crowned and glorified. As the verse in Psalm xxx. may be beautifully and literally rendered—"Sorrow" (like a wayfaring man, a sojourner) "LODGETH for a night," (the night of earth) "BUT, joy cometh in the *morning*!" Happy time! when, as I reach the gates of glory, the last burden of *sorrow* will roll from my back, and I shall pursue my heavenly way rejoicing!

There shall be no night of sin there.

It is sin that bound its death-bands over the world's fevered brow. "What is soul-rest," says Richard Baxter, "but our freedom from sin?" Give me all that the world can bestow, so long

as this nature of mine remains at the best only partially sanctified,—continuing to drag about with it a body of SIN, I cannot be *perfectly happy*. What a blessed world would the present be, were sin expunged from it! What a joyful world that SHALL be, where we *know* that sin is to be for ever expelled—the trail of the serpent never polluting its blessed soil! *Here*, Satan approached with his foul assaults even the holy Son of God. “Cast thyself down,” was his blasphemous appeal, as he took him to the Temple summit, (Matt. iv. 6.) But the Prince of this world will in vain plant his footsteps on the pinnacle of the New Jerusalem Temple;—into it nothing that is unholy shall ever enter. “The spirits of the just” will then be “*made perfect!*” *Here*, there is sin in the best and holiest. There are decayed branches in the stateliest Lebanon cedars—flaws in the purest cisterns—ripples of corruption in the clearest fountains; but *there*, all will be presented “without fault” before the throne—not a trace or lineament of sin adhering—nothing to be feared,—no dark contingencies—no real or fancied evils. *Night* here is a

shadowy-time—full of spectral images,—types of uncertainty, mutability, change. But looking forward to Heaven, we have “*the hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began,*” (Tit. i. 2). Oh! thrice blessed moment, when the stormy night-watch will be over;—when we shall feel the shallows underneath us,—see the haven in sight,—the morning light breaking over the towers of the Heavenly city—angels pointing to them as they crowd the shore, and exclaiming, in contrast with what we have left behind us—“THERE SHALL BE NO NIGHT THERE!”

“I journey forth rejoicing,
 From this dark vale of tears,
 To heavenly joy and freedom,
 From earthly bonds and fears.
 When Christ, our Lord, shall gather
 All His redeem'd again,
 His kingdom to inherit—
 GOOD-NIGHT, till then!

“I go to see His glory
 Whom we have loved below—
 I go—the blessed angels—
 The holy saints—to know.

Our lovely one departed,
I go to find again,
And wait for you to join us—
GOOD-NIGHT, till then!

“I hear the Saviour calling—
The joyful hour has come,
The angel guards are ready
To guide me to our home ;
Where Christ, our Lord, shall gather
All His redeem'd again,
His kingdom to inherit—
GOOD-NIGHT, till then!”



XXX.



Living Fountains.

“No sickness there !

No weary wasting of the frame away,
No fearful shrinking from the midnight air,
No dread of summer's bright and fervid ray !

“No hidden grief,

No wild and cheerless vision of despair,
No vain petition for a swift relief,
No tearful eye, no broken hearts, are there !

“Care has no home

Within that realm of ceaseless praise and song ;
Its tossing billows break and melt in foam,
Far from the mansions of the spirit-throng !”

“They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more ;
neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat : for
the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall
feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains
of waters ; and God shall wipe away all tears from
their eyes.”—REV. vii. 16, 17.



HIS is a glorious note of celestial music,
one of the sweetest chimes of the upper
sanctuary. All that poetry ever wrote,

R

or touching pathos conceived, falls immeasurably short of the grandeur of this passage. No wonder that the Bible-leaf of a great poet, who studied to better purpose the volume of nature than the volume of grace, should, nevertheless, be moist with tears here.

The verse contains another of the many negative descriptions of Heaven; for the Bible most frequently describes Heaven, not by what it *is*, but by what it is *not*. The glorified band of once sin-stricken and woe-worn pilgrims, have now reached the pure river of the water of life. They are like Israel of old when seated under the walls of Jericho, to keep their first passover in Canaan. The manna had ceased—they were eating the new corn of the land—the hunger, the thirst, the sun-blight of the desert were ended, —Jordan was crossed. Their weary feet were treading the Land of Promise, for which they had toiled and suffered during forty protracted years of wilderness-privation. But the memory of these was all that now remained. Their Marahs and Achors—their scorching marches—the burning sands by day—the chilly damps of

night—their conflict with the disciplined warriors of Amalek,—the recollection of all this only served to enhance the prospect of peaceful repose in the Covenanted Heritage: “the land of brooks and fountains of waters,” a land “flowing with milk and honey,” (Josh. v. 6.)

This verse unfolds the same element of joy in the future blessedness of the true Israel of God, which we referred to in speaking of Heaven under a former emblem —*the joy of contrast*. *Here*, in this sinning, sorrowing, weeping world, the believer hungers, thirsts, weeps, suffers. *There*, in yonder tearless world, “*he shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more.*” The unfallen angels know nothing of these experiences; they never sinned, and therefore they have never known what it is to suffer. “Hunger,” “thirst,” are words unknown to *them*! But to the glorified pilgrim, once sin-burdened and sorrow-burdened,—exposed to the fiery sun and the desert blast,—how will the joy of heavenly rest be increased by the remembrance of the toil and conflict which preceded it?

Here, and *There*, how startling the comparison!

Here, the burning rays of trial often wither up his best joys. Affliction, like the desolating simoom, sweeps down in a moment his most cherished props and fondest shelters. *There*, no withering blast can burst upon him ;—no “fiery trial can try him ;”—the furnace-heat of the desert can no longer be felt or feared ! *Here*, he “hungers,” panting after the attainment of earthly objects, which, even *when* attained, never satisfy the longings of his immortal spirit. *Here*, he is often like the fevered patient, turning from side to side on his anguished couch, imagining every change of posture will be easier. *There*, he shall be eternally and everlastingly satisfied. No longer shall there be so much as one longing unanswered, or one aching void unfilled. *Here*, he “*thirsts*,”—“he seeks water and there is none.” The world’s sources of refreshment are like the summer’s brook, dry when most needed. Read the inscription on that earthly cistern,—“*It is leaky ;*” it “*can hold no water !*” (Jer. ii. 13.) But *there* the vessel is ever full, ever flowing, overflowing ;—“*They shall drink of the river of thy*

pleasures"—“*With thee,*” *O God,* “*is the fountain of life,*” (Ps. xxxvi. 9.)

“*God,*” it is here said, “*shall wipe away all tears from our eyes.*” As the word “Eye,” to the Jew, was synonymous with “Fountain,” it would seem to denote that the gracious hand of a gracious God will dry up the very fountain of weeping ; so that not so much as one tear-drop will again bedim or bedew the face ! Often, *here*, as weary wandering birds, with drooping wing and wailing cry, we roam over earth’s ocean of change ; *There*, we shall fold our wings for ever—nestling in safety within the true ark of God. *Here*, it is “*without the camp, bearing His reproach.*” *There*, it is *within* the gates, sharing His glory !

Oh, what a comfort to traverse in thought that glorious white-robed company, and to think, in the midst of my own vileness, “They were once as vile as I !” Every robe there, was stained with sin. “*Whence came they ?*” One was haughty, a persecutor, injurious. Another was a thief, translated from a felon’s cross to a believer’s crown. Another is a saint who had escaped the

contaminating influences of "Cæsar's household," and was made by grace a monument of mercy. Another was once a weeping Magdalene. But all had "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." If the angels who have never sinned, find their chief happiness in God's service, what a deepened intensity of joy will there be in the happiness of sainted believers! The angels know God only as their Creator and Benefactor; *they* know Him as their Redeeming God in Jesus. The one can sing, "*Worthy is the Lamb!*" the others alone can add, "*He was slain for us!*"

Do any mourners read this page? Be comforted. Listen once more to the sublime dialogue, "Who are these?" "*These are they who have come out of great tribulation!*" There is an identity of experience between you and every member of that glorified multitude. They have all graduated in a school of trial. You may now be sowing in tears, but, like them, you will soon "reap in joy." And, better than all;—"the Lamb" shall "*feed you and*

lead you," and with His own gentle hand wipe away every lingering tear-drop! If it was delightful even on earth to repose in our every anxiety on Him ;—what will it be to rest in the arms of His love, when anxiety, sorrow, weakness, weariness, are known no more! He has loved us in the past ;—There, we are told He is to love us and tend us for ever and ever. On earth we have loved perishable friends too much, but here is One we cannot love too well. In eternity we shall speak of “the great love wherewith He *loved*”—nay, wherewith He *loveth* us!

Reader, often anticipate that blessed communion and exalted fellowship, when you shall hear His voice of tenderness stealing down from “the living fountains of waters,” by which He is eternally to lead you, saying, “Come up hither!” Soon your head will ache no more—your heart break no more—cherished earthly ties will be sundered no more—sin will reign no more. There will be no furrowed features there,—no withered gourds,—no blighted hopes,—no dread of desolating afflictions. The days of your

mourning will be ended. And when you see Him and throw yourself at His feet, what will be your confession, as from the sunlit summit you look back on the windings of the lower valley? "*He hath done all things WELL!*"

"More than conquerors at last,
Here they find their trials o'er ;
They have all their sufferings past,
Hunger now and thirst no more ;
No consuming heat they feel,
From the sun's oppressive ray,
In a milder clime they dwell,
Region of eternal day !

"They with Him shall ever reign,
Them the Lamb shall always feed,
With the tree of life sustain,
To the living fountains lead :
He shall all their sorrows chase,
All their wants and doubts remove,
Wipe the tears from every face,
In a world of endless love !"



XXXI.



“O sweet home-echo on the pilgrim’s way,
 Thrice-welcome message from a land of light ;
 As through a clouded sky the moonbeams stray,
 So on eternity’s deep-shrouded night
 Streams a mild radiance from that cheering word,
 ‘So shall we be for ever with the Lord.’”

“I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.”
 —PSALM xxiii. 6.

SO mused a saint of God six thousand
 years ago, who is now a safe “Dweller”
 in “the House” of which he so sweetly
 sung.

Can I also pluck for myself this last Eshcol
 Grape ;—and go on through the wilderness, joy-
 ously treading whatever path my God may see
 meet to allot me, looking beyond the path and
 beyond the wilderness to the glorious termina-
 tion? Can I close this little volume, endorsing

every page with Paul's happy superscription, which made him rise superior to all trials, and exult in all tribulations: "*And so shall we EVER be with the Lord?*" (1 Thes. iv. 17.)

Let us gather up a few closing thoughts of coming bliss which our motto-verse suggests.

(1.) "I will *dwell*." The expression speaks of *perfect security*.

The great haven is reached; the raging waters are all past; nothing can ever disturb the deep rapture of Heavenly repose. Shall we repeat once more the oft-reiterated assertion in these pages, that on earth all is mutation, change, insecurity, and that when the sea of life is least ruffled, there is often the too truthful presentiment of the gathering tempest! Even our spiritual frames, and feelings, and experiences, how fitful and uncertain. To-day, the entry in the soul-diary is, "*Thou art my portion, O God*," (Ps. cxix. 57.) To-morrow, it is, "*My soul is cast down within me*," (Ps. xlii. 6.) No sooner do we get a glimpse at the third heavens than a "messenger of Satan" is waiting to "buffet" us, and the soaring eagle falls with disabled wing to the earth.

But not one shadow of change or temptation will ever flit across these heavenly skies. Stars may be quenched, suns annihilated, the world pass away; but the Believer in Glory stands *secure*,—the crown must be plucked from the Redeemer's brow, ere *his* can be touched! This is the guarantee of His bliss,—“*Because I live ye shall live also.*” “The unregenerate,” says an old writer, “will be past hope, and the saints past fear, for ever.” Yes! “I will DWELL.” It will be an *unchangeable* happiness; or, *if* changing, changing only “*from glory to glory!*”

(2.) “I will dwell *in the House of the Lord.*” This tells of *Happiness* and *Rest*.

It is a *Home* word;—it invests Heaven with a home-aspect;—it is a household sanctuary. “*Absent*,” says Paul, “*from the body*,”—(ἐνδημῆσαι πρὸς τὸν Κύριον,)—“at home” “*with the Lord.*” *Here*, we are out-door servants, exposed to the “windy storm and tempest.” *There*, we shall be taken and welcomed within the royal palace; clothed, fed, honoured, inside the halls of our “Father’s dwelling.” “Did He love thee, an enemy,—thee, a sinner,—thee, who even loathedst

thyself, and own thee when thou didst disclaim thyself, and will He not now immeasurably love thee a son,—thee a perfect saint? When perfect created love and most perfect uncreated love meet together, it will not be like Joseph and his brethren who lay upon one another's necks weeping; it will be loving and rejoicing, not loving and sorrowing.* “You now begin,” said Chrysoſtom to a friend during his exile, —“*you* now begin to lament my banishment, but I have done so for a long time; for since I knew that Heaven is my home, I have esteemed the whole world a place of exile.” With that “Home” ever in view, seek to be able to say, when “the Master is come and calleth for thee,”—

“Reach forth Thy hand with pitying care,
And guide me through the latest snare;
Methinks ev'n now, in bursting beams,
The radiance from Thy casement beams;
No more I shed the pilgrim's tear,
I hear Thy voice, my *Home* is near.”†

(3.) “I will dwell in the House of the Lord *for ever*.” This speaks of *perpetuity*.

“The last jewel of our crown,” says Baxter,

“Saint's Rest.”

† Sigourney.

"is that it will be an *everlasting* rest. . . . While we were servants we held by lease, and that but for the term of a transitory life, but 'the son abideth in the house FOR EVER.' Our earthly paradise in Eden had a way out, but none that we could ever find *in* again; but this eternal paradise hath a way in, but no way out again."

Blessed assurance, amid so much that is transitory! All the most enduring things of earth *are* passing and *have* passed away. The palaces of Babylon, the towers of Zion, the bulwarks of Tyre, they have had their proud magnificence written, but it was written on the sands of time! Where are they now? The tide of ages has washed nearly every vestige away! Every little home, too, is a world in miniature. Its joys, they are passing; its friendships, they are perishable; its props and shelters, in one night the storm sweeps them down! "*But,*" says Jesus of His redeemed saint, "*I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out,*" (Rev. iii. 12.) The true Ark will bring its crowded millions to the summit of the heavenly Ararat, not to go forth again amid storm and tempest, to battle

with sin and sorrow, but to repose amid the unbroken sunshine of the everlasting hills. On earth "there is a time to be born, and a time to die," (Eccles. iii. 2.) In Heaven, "*they neither marry nor are given in marriage,*" (Matt. xxii. 30.) There are neither births nor deaths as *here*; no wearing out of successive generations,—"*neither shall they die any more,*" (Luke xx. 36.)

What a volume is contained in these two words, "FOR EVER!" To think that after *millions* on *millions* of years and ages shall have rolled by, still I shall be but on the threshold of immortal being, on the confines and outskirts of limitless life. My lifetime commensurate with that of God Himself. His throne the centre of my bliss, *eternity* the circumference. "O Eternity! Eternity!" says one who has now entered on the reality,* "it is thine to crown the joys above. Thou art the knot which bindeth the bundle of life together. Without the thought of thee, dim sadness would not spare the faces of the blessed; their songs would be marred with dreadful discordance, and all the blissful bowers would lose their charms."

* M'Ewen.

Is this "House of the Lord" to be my everlasting dwelling-place? Let me seek to regard it with a home-feeling; to have my affections more centred on it. Let the intervention of no meaner object dim or obscure its glories. It is said of good Philip Henry, that when his children visited him, he used to pray "that their next meeting might be either *in* Heaven or further on in their way *towards* it." Soon the morning hour shall strike. The canopy of night is now glittering with stars of promise—earnests of the day of glory. Already gleams of light steal through the distant casement,—“The Beloved” is “looking through the lattice,” (Song of Sol. ii. 9,) and saying that the “little while” of earth will soon be over, and “He that *shall* come, *will* come.” The precise day of His coming is unknown, that we may attend upon every day, and that we may not have our roll to search for, when the sound of His chariot-wheels is heard!

We have been traversing in thought the glories of a coming Heaven—plucking a few Eshcol-clusters from the celestial vineyard; yet, after

all, how poor, how inadequate our conception of future blifs! Two inspired penmen have written on the same theme. *John* never saw Heaven ;—he *attempts* to describe it. He paints its walls of jasper, and gates of crystal, and streets of gold. *Paul* *did* see Heaven. He was caught up to its gates. He gazed where mortal eye had never gazed before. He saw glory rising on glory. He obtained a sight of “the invisible.” When he returns to earth to commit the wondrous apocalypse to writing, he is *dumb* ;—the pen drops from his hand ; he gives, as the noblest description of it he *can* give, that it is *indefscribable*. “*I saw*,” he says, “*what it is not possible for a man to utter*,” (2 Cor. xii. 4.)

O God! do Thou grant, by the aids of that Holy Spirit whose office and work it is “to shew us things to come,” (John xvi. 13,) that these feeble thoughts and musings on coming glory, may tend to wean me from earth, and train me for Heaven ; leading me to live more habitually under the power of things unseen,—to have more of the girded loins and the burning lamps, and “so much the more” as I see “the day approaching,”

(Heb. x. 15.) "Time passeth on," says the saintly Baxter,—who always seems to stand as if one foot had already crossed the heavenly threshold,—“yet a few days and we shall be here no more. Many diseases are ready to assault us. We that are now preaching, and hearing, and talking, and walking, must very shortly be carried and laid in the dust. We are almost there already. We know not whether we shall have another sermon, or Sabbath, or hour! How active should they be who know they have so short a space for so great a work.”

Reader, may these “sips of the heavenly fountain” refresh you for your onward journey. May these vintage-gleanings in the desert lead you to long more ardently for the fulness and fruition of the true Canaan. Press forward, “uphill and downhill, to the city which hath foundations;” so that when death comes, you may have nothing to do *but to die*;—to leave the pilgrim-staff, and take up the pilgrim-crown;—to step ashore from the vessel of life, and make your final “leap into the arms of Infinite Love.” “Already,” said Edward Bickersteth, when in sight of Glory, “already

I see the distant shore! I behold the Holy City having the glory of God, whither are gone many dear friends. There I hope to meet many of those now so justly dear to me. What want I more? God is *there*, my portion, my joy, my happiness, and in *His* presence is 'fulness of joy.' Animated with these hopes, what is the pageant of this world?"

"Here kindred hearts are sever'd far and wide
By many a weary mile of land and sea,
Or life's all varied cares, and paths divide;
But yet a joyful gathering shall be—
The broken links repair'd—the lost restored—
'So shall we be FOR EVER with the Lord!'

"O precious promise, mercifully given,
Well may it hush the wail of earthly woe;
O'er the dark passage to the gates of heaven,
The light of hope and resurrection throw!
Thanks for the blessed life-inspiring word—
'So shall we be FOR EVER with the Lord!'"

"AMEN! EVEN SO! COME, LORD JESUS!"

“ EYE HATH NOT SEEN, NOR EAR HEARD,
NEITHER HAVE ENTERED INTO THE HEART OF MAN,
THE THINGS WHICH GOD HATH PREPARED
FOR THEM THAT LOVE HIM.”

I COR. II. 9.



The End.



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